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TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF KING JAMES' BIBLE, 1611

See Chapter XXX.

THE BIBLE
STORY AND CONTENT

BY

CALVIN WEISS LAUFER

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TO

FATHER AND MOTHER

MY

FIRST TEACHERS

IN THE SCRIPTURES

44327

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PART I

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE OUR HERITAGE

In telling the story of the Bible we may expect many and great surprises. Among them are its wide use and influence: it is found in every civilized country. People quote its wise and comforting words, and daily in our reading and conversation we find this so. No book is cherished more, which explains why, as one travels from place to place, copies may be seen in hotels and schools, court-rooms and literary clubs, churches and editorial rooms. There is a Bible in every Christian home, and it is usually the finest book on the library table. It feels the softest and looks the best, and there are times when what it contains, we are quite sure, are the kindest words ever spoken or written.

Its Antiquity

When we take the Bible in hand and examine it, we are attracted to its title page. Perhaps you have never looked at it closely before; let us do so now. In my own copy it reads as follows:

THE HOLY BIBLE
Containing the
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:
Translated out of the original tongues: and
with the former translations diligently
compared and revised, by his
Majesty's special command.

This is interesting and very informing. These lines tell us that the Bible has come to us from the distant past and was not originally written in our own language. It was written in other tongues and what these were we shall learn later. We have it in our own language because nearly four hundred years ago the English people and their great King wanted it in their own tongue. A translation was made at the direction of James I, who also gave instructions to have it read in churches.

Not a modern book.—What, then, does this mean? It means that the Bible is a very old book and has come to us as an inheritance. The copy you have in your hand may have a new cover, but its contents are so old that they make us start with wonder. The things it writes about happened centuries ago. Some of its beautiful passages that you learned by heart in the Sunday school or the Junior Young People's Society, are almost as old as the hills. Here is one you all know:

> **The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**
> **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.—Psalm 23: 1, 2.**

How old do you suppose this beautiful poem is? If it was written by David—and many scholars think he wrote it—it was done in the tenth century before Jesus was born. You see, then, it was written more than twenty-nine hundred years ago. Or take this passage which you will find in Exodus and know very well:

> **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.**
> **Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:**

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.—Exodus 20: 8-10.

These words, we are told in the Bible, were first written down by Moses. How long ago was that? There are those who think it was thirty-four hundred years ago. Then there is a very beautiful passage you hear almost every day; you will recognize it at once:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.—John 14: 1, 2.

These words, as you know, were spoken by Jesus nearly nineteen centuries ago. We see from these examples that the Bible is not a modern book, but very old indeed. In spite of that fact it is read more widely than the most popular novel that has just come off the press. Though it is a very ancient book, the Bible is yet so fresh, helpful, and inspiring that for millions of people it is, and always will be, the most up-to-date book in existence.

The tongues in which it was written.—When Jesus read the Bible, or had it read to him, in what language was it? The Bible tells us how he visited his home town, Nazareth, and taught the people in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He read the following:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering

of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. . . .

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.—Luke 4: 18, 19.

The wonderful words that Jesus read were first written in the Hebrew, and what is true of them, with few exceptions, is true of the entire Old Testament. The exceptions are small portions in Ezra and Daniel. When Alexander the Great conquered western Asia in the third century before Christ, Greek became the language of culture and official relations. Consequently, later the Old Testament was translated into the Greek. Later on the New Testament was written in that language and used in the beginning of the Christian Church.

However, before the Bible came to us in the language that we now have it, it had to pass through several others, like the Syriac, the Latin, and the various Anglo-Saxon tongues. That it should come through so many centuries and survive its native tongues is a wonderful tribute to the Bible. It shows that its contents are so important that humanity insists upon their preservation.

The authors of the Bible.—The Bible was written by many different people. Just how many there were we do not know definitely. Possibly, however, there were thirty-six of them. Some of these writers were only editors, who compiled and arranged what had been written by others. They came from all walks and stations in life, from the shepherd on the hills to the king who sat on the throne. Some were fishermen; others were tent-makers; at least one was a doctor, and still another was a prince. Many of them were prophets, and at least

one of them a great musician. (Recall some of them.)

Did you ever discover a new author? Then you know what a thrill it gives. Sometimes when that happens, old favorites are forgotten. It is a way human nature has in disposing of old friends. While this is so, the writers of the Bible are not forgotten: their names are household words. We think highly of them, and some of us are called by their names. What the Bible thinks of them the following passage makes plain:

> **Prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 Peter 1: 21.**

The Bible's Long Journey

In coming to us the Bible had to make a long journey, and it was not always a pleasant one. A hurried glance at history will give us some idea of what occurred.

Let us open at random any high-school textbook on general history and see what happens. Possibly the book may open at a place which deals with Russia. Now, Russia is a very old country and some time ago observed the thousandth year of its national existence. In the first year of Russia's life the Bible had already traveled many hundreds of years and was great in its influence. Or let us turn to the pages which deal with the British Isles, which have been a dominant factor in world affairs for centuries. When Britain began, the Bible had already been on its journey for a long period of time and had acquired an authority that

could not be disputed. However, should we open the volume to those chapters which deal with ancient history, the story would be just as full of interest. Parts of the Bible saw the decline in power of the two great empires, Babylonia and Egypt, which held western Asia under their control for centuries. Parts of it saw the rise and the fall of Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Bible parallels the history of many nations, but we have not time to indicate them. It witnessed the flourishing days of Constantine and was received with favor by him. It came down the Middle Ages, saw the empire of Charlemagne rise to power and crumble into dust; it witnessed the crusades and marveled at their passion; it brought comfort to the faithful in those long years in which Germany, France, England, Italy, and Spain were in the travail of birth and waiting for the day of their power.

Through all these centuries of life the Bible came to us. The wonder is that anything of it is left; but it is here, somewhat worn by its hard journey, but a thousand times more precious on that account. It was able to make the journey, and was not permitted to lose its way, because it is the one book that humanity needs most and cannot do without.

Its Secure Place

All of us have lived long enough to see books come and go. Some have had the "run of the season" or been "all the vogue," but are no more. We have read books that won temporary favor, still others seemed destined to greater fortune, but all alike are recalled now only with effort. This is not so of

the Bible, which has a larger circulation than any other book, and is read more than ever. Its place is secure.

How is this? Why this should be so, a group of high-school boys tried once to determine in their Sunday-school class. What they had to say will help us to understand why the Bible has such eminence.

(1) One of them said, "*I think people want the Bible because it tells them how to live.*" His answer is correct. No book has more to say about life than the Bible. It knows the human heart and shows it how to realize its ambitions, hopes, and dreams. The Bible has a secure place because it shows us how to live. This the psalmist states clearly, as follows:

> **Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—Psalm 119: 105.**

(2) Another said, "*Folk want the Bible because it shows them what the best people are like.*" He also was right. The great and good men and women of the Bible are examples for us and inspire us to right conduct and help us to achieve character. "No other book," says Dr. Washington Gladden, "fixes our thoughts so strictly upon character as the Bible." How much this helps us once led Paul to write about the glory of the Saviour, and this is what he said:

> **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Corinthians 3: 18.**

(3) Still another in the class felt the Bible had

such a secure place because "*It tells us that God is man's best friend.*" How beautiful that is! The truth is that from the first page of the Bible to the last its contents gleam with the love and solicitude of God. Indeed, it is full of him. This is why "It is read in a thousand pulpits every Sabbath. The sun never sets on its gleaming pages. It is at home among plain folk and it is at ease with the most learned and exalted. It is everywhere. Love seeks it for strength, sin turns to it for salvation, age seeks it for confidence, the sick read it for courage."

This is the book we have inherited. It has come to us through the kindness and love of God, who seeks us for himself and spares nothing to make us his loving children.

Study Topics

1. We have seen that the Bible is an old book; does this fact make it less valuable?
2. If you desired information on physiology or geography, would you use an old or a recent work of reference? Is the Bible an up-to-date book?
3. Did it require a long or short time to write and compile the Bible? Recall the paragraph entitled, "The Bible Not a Modern Book."
4. In what languages was the Bible written? Which of these languages has the finest literature?
5. How many authors did God use to write the Bible? How many can you recall?
6. Why does the Bible have such a secure place in the life of man? Recall discussion in the closing part of the chapter.
7. Would you like to live in a Bible-less community? If not, why not?

CHAPTER II

THE VARIETY OF ITS CONTENTS

THE title page of the Bible gave us our first surprise. A second is given by its table of contents. This is not like that of other books, where the reader is introduced to the subject treated and given some idea of how the author proceeds. When we turn to it in the Bible we find ourselves looking at something altogether different. As a table of contents it presents a **list of books.**

THE BIBLE IS A LIBRARY

The Bible is a library of books. Someone has said, "It is two libraries, a Jewish one with a Christian supplement." Let us run the eye down the table of contents. What happens? We find that there are sixty-six books in the Bible, and of this number thirty-nine are in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. Here, then, as it is often pictured on Bible-school charts, is a whole shelf of books. Genesis is a book; Joshua is a book; Ruth is a book; Luke is a book. And there are many more, all of them bound between two covers, and the material between them is so important that Goethe said, "It is the foundation of all culture and education."

The word "Bible."—The name "Bible" is an interesting word. Did you ever look it up? It

means "the book," which is a happy term, for the Bible is the Book of books. As a word "Bible" is directly traceable to the ancient habit of writing. Many centuries ago people did not have paper to write on, and one of the materials they used was the outer coat or rind of the papyrus reed, which was called *biblos*. If you look at the word closely, you can almost see the word "Bible." Later what was written upon the rind of the papyrus came to be called *biblos*. Now, *biblos* is a Greek word, and later came to mean a book. When the Greeks thought of a small book, they wrote it thus—*biblion*. If they thought of many books, the word was written "*biblia*," which means, "the books." *Ta Biblia* was the term applied to the Scriptures by the early Christians. For them the Bible was "the books."

Owing to the peculiarities of language, with which we become familiar in our study of ancient tongues, the word "*biblia*" to people speaking the Latin would not sound like a plural word but a singular one. When they used it in thinking of the Scriptures the word meant "*the book.*" Thus early in the Christian Church this collection of sacred writings was thought of both as *many* and as *one;* which is true even yet.

Old and New Testaments.—A moment ago we ran down the table of contents rather hurriedly. Perhaps something escaped us! The author's Bible states the following: "Books of the Old Testament"; and "Books of the New Testament." This indicates that there are two great divisions in the Bible: they are bound together and constitute our Bible.

The Old Testament was the Bible Jesus knew. There was no New Testament in his day. Both he and his followers used the Old Testament and loved it. From it they were taught about the wonderful history of the Jews, how God cared for them and planned to make their religious life a blessing to the world. The Old Testament was compiled during the long history of the Jews and reflects more than sixteen centuries of their hopes and experiences. It tells us what God had done for them and was willing to do for all people, if they loved, obeyed, and served him. It is called a "testament" because the Israelites thought of their relation to God as a kind of *agreement*, or covenant. The Old Testament tells the story of how the people either succeeded or failed in keeping the covenant.

How faithfully God was keeping his side of the covenant, the Bible shows on almost every page. He is constantly reminding his people, as the following will show:

> **And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.**
>
> **The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.—Deuteronomy 5: 1, 2.**

> **Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:**
>
> **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.—Deuteronomy 6: 4, 5.**

And now, how about the New Testament? It is the second great division of the Bible, and it is

a much smaller collection of books. It took less than a hundred years to write and includes but twenty-seven books. Why were these written? Perhaps John can help us. You know he wrote several books, and closes one of them with these words:

> **These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.—John 20:31.**

The New Testament, then, is like the Old Testament in this, that it is a record of the new and larger life that came into the world through Jesus Christ. Its books tell us about Jesus, his sayings and his great works. It also records the history of the Christian Church and how, under the guidance of Jesus, it grew from a handful of people into a mighty host.

However, these two sections of the Bible are so vitally related that, as we shall see in the next chapter, they make the Bible, strangely enough, one book.

Its Diverse Literature

An old adage says, "Variety is the spice of life." Stop and think how true that is in our books. They are not all alike, are they? They are as varied as our desires, tastes, and even our whims. So in our libraries at home, no matter how small, there are volumes on history, biography, and religion. There are storybooks and others on art and science. A library presents a feast of good things and the menu is as varied as our needs.

Fortunately, the Bible is like that. It has a

great variety of material. In it are legends, laws, maxims, hymns, sermons, letters, and prayers. Some of the poems we know best we got out of the Bible and learned to recite before we entered our teens. You know the following, even though there is printed here only the first line of each:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.—Psalm 1: 1.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.—Psalm 19: 1.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.—Psalm 121: 1.

These are very beautiful poems, and there are many more. Some of them we repeat to ourselves when in trouble, and others we use because they make us happy and hopeful. And then there are its stories which our mothers taught us in childhood and of which we never tire. In the Bible are also codes of law, which have been found so wise and just that they have been incorporated in the constitutions of states and kingdoms. There are thrilling messages from prophets and preachers, so exalted in tone and character that to this day they remain unexcelled. Do you know, for example, anything finer than this, which is from the Sermon on the Mount?

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. . . .

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—Matthew 5: 3, 4, 8.

There is also romance in the Bible so beautiful and tender, so lofty in thought and so perfect in form, that its charm is without parallel. Besides all these forms of writing there are sage sayings and proverbs, and some of them we have recited to each other or traced out in our copybooks in school.

Such is this book, which we study together, that it stands in a class by itself. Of it Dr. Charles A. Briggs in a moment of enthusiasm once wrote: "The Bible is an ocean of heavenly wisdom. The little child may sport upon its shores and derive instruction and delight. The most accomplished scholar finds its vast extent and mysterious depths beyond his grasp."[1]

Classification of the Books

Thinking, now, of the Bible as a library, or shelf of books, how would we classify them? This we should know, for it will help us to master its contents. The usual grouping of the books, which you should know by heart, is as follows:

Old Testament books.—The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are divided into five groups, dealing with the Law, the History, the Poetry, the Major Prophets, and the Minor Prophets:

1. *Books of the Law.* These are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books, sometimes called the Pentateuch, tell the story of mankind, especially of the Jews, from the creation to the death of Moses.

2. *Historical Books.* Of these there are twelve.

[1] From *Biblical Study.* Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

They are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. They take up the story after the death of Moses and deal with the immigration of the Hebrews, the settlement in Canaan, the establishment of the Monarchy, the Period of the Prophets, the Exile in Babylon and the Restoration. They comprise more than nine centuries of life and history.

3. *Poetical Books.* Of these there are five books, as follows: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. We should know these, because poetry is the earliest mode of literary expression, and, besides, these poems deal with religion and are the finest ever written. In this collection are the chants and songs, anthems and war cries of a truly great people. There are in it lyrics and ballads so simple and finished that they stir us even yet.

4. *The Major Prophets.* These are five in number, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. In these books we see how God showed people what they should know about himself, how to avoid sin, seek righteousness, and always keep his commandments.

5. *The Minor Prophets.* The twelve minor or shorter prophets, are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. They extend over a considerable period and give us vivid glimpses of Jewish history from the eighth century down to probably the third before Christ.

The New Testament books.—The twenty-seven books of the New Testament, which are devoted

to the early days of the Christian era, set forth the life and character of Jesus Christ and the history of his church. They are grouped as follows:

1. *The Gospels.* These are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They are biographical and give us first-hand information about the Saviour, his life and work.

2. *Historical Book.* There is only one, namely, the Acts. It narrates the early days of the church, how it suffered, grew, and prospered.

3. *Pauline Epistles.* There are fourteen of them. Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and possibly Hebrews. These show how Paul, who was a great missionary, wrote letters of counsel and comfort, and proved a friend to the many churches which he and others organized and fostered.

4. *Pastoral Epistles.* These are James, First and Second Peter, First, Second, and Third John, and Jude. These were addressed to the church at large, and were designed to help it with its problems.

5. *Prophetical Book.* This is the book of Revelation, in which the writer deals with the future and the final triumph of the church.

Divine Library

In this chapter we have seen in barest outline what the Bible really is, but we have seen enough to want to know more. How it is knit together, so that with all its diversity and variety of con-

tent, it is *one book*, will be shown in the next chapter. Just now we will only add that many people have written about this book, but one of the finest things ever said about it was by a great Latin scholar, Saint Jerome, who one day lifted it up and turning to his friends said, "This is the Divine Library." Such it is; it is full of God, and when we read it and obey its precepts, he makes us truly great and good.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun,
It gives a light to every age:
It gives, but borrows none."

—William Cowper.

Study Topics

1. Why may we think of the Bible as a library? How many different books does it contain?
2. The word "Bible" has an interesting history. Can you tell us from what the word was derived?
3. Name some of the different kinds of literature in the Bible. Which do you like best?
4. Would you expect to find any poetry in the Bible? Can you recall any? If not, in what books of the Bible would you expect to find it?
5. Do you know any great hero stories? Name them. Are there hero stories in the Bible? Recall some of them.
6. Can one become so accustomed to a library as to be able to find a book in the dark? Can you find the books of the Bible with ease? Drill.
7. Recite the books of the Bible. Learn also to "Bound" them, that is, tell books that precede and follow.

8. Which part of the Bible do you use most frequently? Why? Is this fair to other portions, or to yourself?

For Further Study

See pages 11–20 of Grubb's *The Bible: Its Nature and Inspiration.*

Introductory pages of Sanders' *History of the Hebrews,* pages 1–21.

Stock's *The Story of the Bible.*

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE ONE BOOK

NOTHING is more surprising about the Bible than the fact that, while it is a library, it is *one book*. How this is, it is the purpose of this chapter to make plain.

When we think of other books in our possession, especially of those that are prized most, we often wonder why they have won us so completely. It is due to the fact that their pages are held together by a plot, purpose, or design. If it is a story, we like it because it hangs well together. If it is some other book, the same is true. A common subject, or plot, running through a book gives it unity. Those books that we can recall with the greatest ease are the ones where the plot is most evident. That is why we prefer some of them above others; they are easily read and reproduced. They capture us, as it were, by their purpose or movement. The plot holds the attention so that we can sit in a corner while we read and be unconscious of everything else.

THE UNFOLDING OF A GREAT FRIENDSHIP

Have you ever read Longfellow's "Evangeline"? Why do you like it? Is it not because the story is the unfolding of a great love? The plot has to do with the love of two people, and you are not satisfied until the story ends. So it is with the

Bible: A great design makes it one; a common subject gives it unity. It is held together by the revelation of a great friendship which exists between God and humanity. That is the common subject of the Bible and it runs through all its pages. It tells us many things to make this clear, and what some of them are will now be shown.

God as Creator.—What is the very first thing the Bible has to tell us? Let us open it and see. (Turn to Genesis 1 and 2.) It informs us that God is the Creator of all things.

> **In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**
>
> **And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.**
>
> **And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.—Genesis 1: 1-3.**

> **And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.—Genesis 2: 7.**

So the story of God's love and power begins. God is our Creator. He made the world in all its greatness, beauty, and power. God made man, and gave him power to know and understand, trust and enjoy it. This is what God in some way told Moses, who, with others, wrote it down for us. God wants us to know that behind the universe, with its strange happenings in the heavens and on the earth, is his friendly heart. God's heart is behind the world, and we are at the center of it. This is the beginning of the plot that thickens as it proceeds through the Bible. Let us follow it.

God the Companion.—It is a great thing to know that God is the Creator, but that is not wholly satisfying to any of us. Something else is needed: what do you suppose it is? It is this: does God really care for folk? The Bible shows that he does. It indicates how he draws near to people, tells them how to live, and how so to serve him that they may enjoy him forever. In other words, according to the Bible, God's chief interest is in the children he has made.

There are many examples of this, some of which are very familiar. Here are a few:

> **Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:**
>
> **And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.—Genesis 12: 1, 2.**

> **Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.—Genesis 15: 1.**

> **And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.—Genesis 28: 15.**

> **And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.—Luke 24: 15.**

Hundreds of passages like these are in the Bible, and in swift succession lead us on to see that God loves folk, desires their good, is sorry when they sin and happy when they do right. This is what

the Bible plot makes clear from the first, and it means more to humanity than we can ever know.

God's loving purpose.—There is one prayer all of us know. In it are these words: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus taught this prayer because he did not wish any ever to forget that God has a great purpose in mind for the world. God's friendship has great ends in view. He loves as he does because he has certain plans to be realized. Therefore, he often says "Thou shalt not," or "Do this and thou shalt live." Through all the experiences of the Jews, in their long history, God warns them constantly and reminds them that they are his people chosen to do great things in the world.

Do you suppose the Jews ever forgot this? The Bible is full of their failure and sin. It tells us how they forgot God's covenant made to Abraham and often came to grief. It tells us of kings and princes who obeyed God and tried to do his will, and so were blessed and others with them. In plain words—very plain words—it states that sometimes they turned to idols and became the victims of gross immorality and reproach. The story sometimes has a very dark background of tragedy, but it never ceases to say:

> **O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; Thou art mine.—Isaiah 43: 1.**

> **He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.—Isaiah 40: 11.**

The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you.—2 Thessalonians 3:3.

Such is the plot of the Bible. Everywhere it reveals God as Creator, Companion, and Redeemer. This it is that makes the sixty-six books of the Bible *one book*. It is the golden thread that runs through its genealogies, biographies, songs of victory, lamentations of defeat, prayers of penitence, gospel of hope, and its letters of counsel and peace. The story begins with the book of Genesis and ends with Revelation. Everywhere it sounds the same note: God is Love, Friend, Saviour. Professor Sanders writes in one of his books: "The Bible is pervaded by the idea that this is God's world and we are his children. He is our heavenly Father, and if we let him, he will lead us on and upward to the realization of all that is noblest and best."

How God Reveals Himself

The Bible is a very concrete book: it shows us how God leads on in the affairs of man. That is as it should be, for otherwise we would still be in the dark about him. Just as in a great romance, men and events are needed to make a plot vivid and vital, so is it in the Bible. It records how individuals and nations came to know God and his salvation, and it does this with such skill and power that the Bible becomes a great drama of friendship. The plot of the drama is built up around such facts as the following:

God calls people.—Now how can that be? Fortunately the Bible tells us about it, as these Scrip-

ture passages, which introduce longer accounts, indicate.

> **God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.—Exodus 3: 4.**

> **Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.—Exodus 3: 10.**

> **And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.—1 Samuel 3: 10.**

> **I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.—Isaiah 6: 8.**

> **And as he [Saul] journeyed, he came near Damascus: And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:**
> **And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?—Acts 9: 3, 4.**

There are many more examples like this in the Bible and they show us how people become conscious of God as Helper, Saviour, and Friend.

God's leading in history.—Have you ever read any of the great Bible stories that indicate how God helps to make history? Let us recall a few of them:

The story of Joseph, whom God used to deliver the people of Israel (Genesis 37–50).

The deliverance at the Red Sea (Exodus 14).

David, the shepherd boy, defeating Goliath (1 Samuel 17: 32–58).

Paul's call into Macedonia (Acts 16: 9–15).

These examples mean much to us because history is full of experiences like this. We can recall certain events in our own history, where the swelling of a river, the sudden freezing of the ground, the thickening of the fog, delivered us from our enemies. In other words, in the hour of tragedy and crisis God is on the scene. He is our refuge and strength in time of trouble.

Gives us Saviour.—In the Bible the great drama culminates in the coming of Jesus. Centuries before he came, people expected him. Great prophecies were spoken and passionate songs were written about him. When people felt their burdens, lamented their sins, grieved over their defeats, God inspired their hearts with the hope of his coming. Finally Jesus came, and he it is that makes the Bible the greatest book of comfort in the libraries of man. He it is who unifies its inspiring pages and makes them indispensable. "He," says Marcus Dods, "is the central sun who holds together all its various parts."

A Remarkable Fact

All this is very wonderful about the Bible, and we cannot avoid it if we would. The Bible is *one book*, and it is that in spite of the fact that it is really a library of books and was written by many authors. It shows us that God was in the making of it and that he had good people write what he wanted us to know and do. God's eye was on them and their work and in the course of centuries,

through his protecting spirit, he preserved their writings so that they come to us as his word to man.

In writing on the Bible Doctor Moulton observes, "When the historic framework of Scripture and the other literary forms are added, the different parts of the Bible are felt to draw together with the connectedness of a literary plot, the progression from beginning to end has the intensity of a dramatic movement. In this dramatic movement, which covers all time and has the universe as its stage, God is the hero and its plot is Divine Providence."[1]

Study Topics

1. Tell the class about the latest book you read. Did you like it? If it was a story, can you tell it?
2. Does a plot help us to read and remember a book? Why?
3. What great subject makes the sixty-six books of the Bible *one book?* Recall paragraphs on God, the Creator; God, the Companion; and God's purpose.
4. Can you recall any psalms that tell us about God's love and care? Recite them.
5. Do you think God ever helps to make history? See paragraphs on how God leads on.
6. Have you ever felt God very near to you? Do such experiences help us to live better lives?
7. What is the great climax in the Bible toward which its spiritual plot moves? (Read Matthew 2: 1–14.)

For Further Study

See Fiske's *Finding the Comrade God*, pages 133–150.
Dods' *The Bible, Its Origin and Nature.*
Gladden's *Who Wrote The Bible?* pages 1–7.

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CODE OF HAMMURABI DISCOVERED IN SUSA 1901

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CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE AND THE ART OF WRITING

To excel is characteristic of the Jews. They know how to make good in almost every walk of life. Their long history shows that it is a national trait for them to surpass. Their prophets, poets, musicians, merchants, military leaders, and statesmen are in no danger of being outshone. Such a people, then, we would expect to have a great literature. In this we are not disappointed. "No other people," says Professor Foakes-Jackson, "can match their record in any way, in the literature they have given the world."[1] How it was produced and preserved through the art and practice of writing will be of interest.

Bible References to Writing

The Bible is a very informing book and has many things to say for itself. Especially valuable is the information it gives on the practice of writing and the keeping of literary records among the Jews. To know this will help us to account for the book.

Writing practiced early.—Writing is a very ancient art and was practiced in Babylonia centuries before Abraham was called of God to become the

[1] *The Biblical History of the Hebrews.* George H. Doran Company, publishers.

leader of his people. When the Israelites sojourned in Egypt, during the days of Joseph, writing was common and a great literature existed. Many people knew how to write in Canaan before the conquest under Joshua. Was writing, then, one of the accomplishments of the Israelites? Or were they less skilled in this respect than their neighbors? The Bible states in several places that they had mastered the art, that their leaders knew how to write, and that they made every effort to preserve what they wrote. It actually mentions a number of instances where God directly commanded them to make records of the great events of their history, and, of course, this could not have been done if they had been unable to write.

> **And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.—Exodus 17: 14.**

> **Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. . . .**
> **And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people.—Exodus 24: 4, 7.**

> **When Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, . . . Moses commanded the Levites, . . . Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark, . . . there for a witness against thee.—Deuteronomy 31: 24-26.**

We know that Joshua could write, for he memorializes in stone the conquest of Ai, by inscribing an altar with the law of Moses.

> **And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.—Joshua 8: 32.**

The Bible was thus produced by a people who knew how to preserve their laws and customs in writing, and were skilled in their correspondence with other nations. They were just the kind of people God needed to make his thoughts and will known to the rest of the human race.

Book towns.—What are the centers of literary activity in our villages and towns? Are they not our public libraries? A town with a library is a very desirable place to live in: it attracts the best people and inspires public spirit. It gives a community distinction.

Libraries are quite ancient institutions. They have their origin in the remote past. Some of them had already been established in the time of Nineveh. In the early days of the Israelites there were "book towns," to which students were attracted and in which they informed themselves about the past. The Jews called them **Kirjath-sepher,** which means "a city of books" or "a city of records." Such places always became centers of literary activity, in which there were copied and transcribed the stories and traditions, the laws and covenants of the people. Many ancient settlements where the patriarchs had been and in which they had erected altars to the Lord, became literary centers for prophets and priests. In such places the people refreshed themselves concerning their history, just as we do when we go to Boston, Concord, New Haven, New Salem, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington.

Just as we find great librarians in the cities mentioned, so there were in these ancient towns chroniclers and scribes who kept records and preserved

the traditions of the people and the place. Through the encouragement of David and Solomon there was a library at Jerusalem. This, in the days of King Hezekiah, ranked high and had an efficient force of trained copyists, editors, and scribes to keep the literature of the people.

> **And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?—2 Kings 20: 20.**

> **Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, hath burned.—Jeremiah 36: 28.**

It is quite evident from such examples that great effort was made by the Jews to produce and preserve their literature. They left nothing undone to perpetuate their thoughts and experiences. They passed them on to future generations by oral transmission, written record, and by collections of books which they made.

Dictation practiced.—Sometimes we are tempted to feel that everything modern belongs to us. But that is not the case. Taking dictations, for instance, is an old accomplishment, an ancient profession. We now know that parts of the Bible were dictated and that the art of reporting was common before the eighth century B. C. Many of the scribes, who were also gifted as writers, excelled in taking notes. Shebna, described in 2 Kings 18: 18, was such a man. Baruch was a scribe to Jeremiah and reported his messages.

And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.—Jeremiah 36: 17, 18.

It is very likely that Isaiah, who was well born and well to do, had a secretary that attended to the details of his strenuous life and took dictation. The New Testament abounds with information on this point. It gives the names of the persons who took Paul's dictations and infers that one of them assisted Peter. Tertius, who is best known, is mentioned; so also is Silvanus.

I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.—Romans 16: 22.

Materials used.—The Bible is very explicit about the materials that were used in writing. In Ezekiel it refers to ink and ink-horns, indicating that writing fluids of some kind were in use.

And one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's ink-horn by his side.—Ezekiel 9: 2.

Of course there were no such fine materials to write on as we have now. This the Bible makes plain when it mentions the use of clay, which could be burned or hardened, and so kept a long time. Wood, stone, and specially prepared skins were used. The earliest inscriptions were in stone, as the Bible implies in Exodus, where the commandments of God were written on two tables of stone. Whitewashed tablets of wood were used for official notices. The table described in Isaiah was of wood.

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.—Isaiah 30: 8.

Once a plan was made of Jerusalem in clay by Ezekiel, and called a "tile."

Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem.—Ezekiel 4: 1.

It is not surprising to learn also that knives for erasures were employed, and that on at least one occasion such an instrument was used to damage the sacred rolls.

And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth.—Jeremiah 36: 23.

Many more examples might be cited but space will not permit. These will suffice to show how the Bible came to us through the achievements and accomplishments of a people, who were in many respects not unlike their neighbors, but excelled in this, that they knew God and wished to make him known. They used the art of writing to declare and preserve his thought and purpose, his love and good will. In this they are unsurpassed.

Languages used.—The Old Testament, with few exceptions, was written in Hebrew which for a long time was supposed to be the original language of man. It is called a Semitic language because it can be traced directly to Shem, one of the sons of Noah. Its kindred tongues are Assyrian, Babylonian, Arabic, Phœnician and Syriac. From Baby-

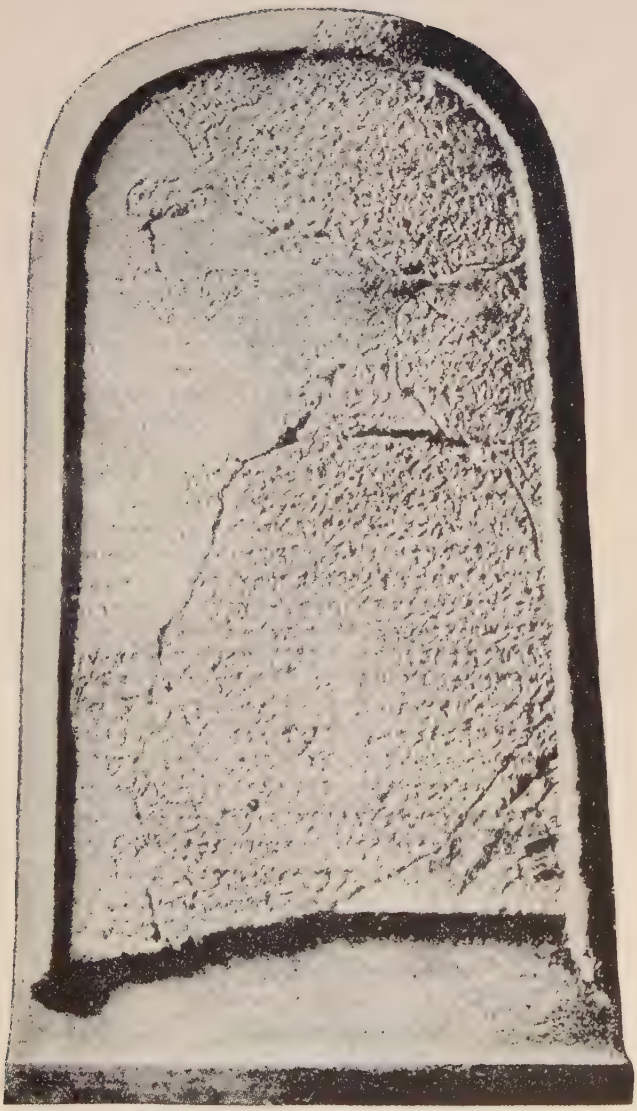
lonian records it is known to have been the language of Canaan, before Abraham settled there with his flocks. It was a written language at an early period, as we know from inscribed stones and engraved clay tablets. What the original looked like may be partly determined from the famous Moabite Stone, which goes back to the ninth century B. C., and is referred to in the next paragraph. Among the peculiarities of the language may be mentioned the fact that its alphabet has no vowels but consists of twenty-two consonants. Like most Semitic tongues, it is read from the right side of the page to the left, and the beginning of a Hebrew book is where one in our language ends. It was used from the rise of the Hebrew nation up to the captivity in Babylon. In the centuries that followed, it ceased to be a spoken language and was supplanted by the Aramaic and the Greek.

The Results of Research

When the Jews began their national existence there were other people to be reckoned with. Did they have any sacred writings? Did they write about the same subjects that are discussed in the Bible? Were they interested in God, the creation and the destiny of man? Fortunately, we can answer these questions, for the ancient world is made to live before us once more. Through the efforts of exploring parties buried cities are uncovered and their literature in a measure restored. Libraries, hidden for many centuries, are unearthed to tell their stories again. For instance, tablets written in the days of Abraham have been unearthed and deciphered. Ancient writings in brick, burned

clay, graven stone, papyrus, and wood are available for study. In 1887 a library was discovered at Tell-el-Amarna, Egypt, in which were tablets containing correspondence between Palestine and Egypt in the time of Moses. In 1901 great interest was aroused by a stone column found at Susa, on which were engraved the laws of Hammurabi, and which antedate Moses by more than a thousand years. The Moabite Stone, inscribed with ancient Hebrew characters, was found in 1868 and goes back to 850 B. C., when Mesha, king of Moab, won a victory over Omri, king of Israel. The Siloam inscription is another good example. This was found in 1880 through a boy falling into the Pool of Siloam, where he saw rocks carved in ancient Hebrew and which recorded the completion of a conduit connecting the Pool of Siloam with the Virgin's Well at Jerusalem. It goes back to Hezekiah, 700 B. C.

"Finds" like these help us to know what the ancient world was thinking, for they deal with many of the questions dealt with in the Bible. However, none of them compete in any measure with what is recorded in the Bible about man, God, the creation, and the future. Why is this difference? It is due to the fact that the Jews, as Professor Kent writes, "were in vital, living contact with God." They were peculiarly his people, set apart to become a spiritual blessing to humanity. Their great leaders were God's watchmen and seers, his heralds and prophets, who came each in his time to help God to make a better humanity. The world was not worthy of many of them, but their work abides. They, being dead, yet speak.



THE MOABITE STONE

Study Topics

1. From what you know about the Jews to-day, are they a people that like to excel? Do you know any callings in which they excel?
2. Prepare a short report on the art of writing. Consult either Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, or any encyclopædia.
3. Was writing an accomplishment of the Jews at the beginning of their history? Does the Bible give us any information on the matter? See discussion in this chapter.
4. Why do we have libraries in our villages and towns? Are libraries of recent or ancient origin?
5. Did the Israelites have places known as "book towns"? What benefit were these towns to the people?
6. Is the taking of dictation an old or new profession? Recall the discussion of this chapter.
7. What were used by ancient people as writing materials? Did the Jews use any of them in preserving their literature?
8. Prepare a short explanation of the Moabite stone. See *Hastings' Bible Dictionary* or the *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

For Further Study

Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, Article on "Writing."
Encyclopedia Britannica.
Grubb, *The Bible: Its Nature*, etc., pages 34–37.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 15ff.

CHAPTER V

EARLY COLLECTIONS OF OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE

(From Moses to the Exile)

The Old Testament, as we observed before, was written during a period comprising twelve centuries: a period eight times as long as the history of the United States. How was the Bible written, collected, and finally completed during that time? Let us look behind the veil of antiquity and see.

Period of Lore and Tradition

This period covers several centuries and goes back to the very beginning of Jewish history. In it the Jews had little, if any, written literature; but their heroic deeds and experiences were passed on by word of mouth. The people were nomadic in their life, moved from place to place with their flocks and herds, and had no time for literary pursuits. They were content to rehearse their experiences to each other in story and song. Many of the things they had to tell were associated with their great men, like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Often in camp and in the market place aged men related the very incidents that have come down to us and that have been taught in the Sunday school and dramatized in the Young People's Societies. Long before they were written, shepherds

and sheiks, at their fires during the evening, told them again and again to the profit and enjoyment of those sitting by.

And what were the stories they told? Among them were the following: the Story of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and of Abraham, the friend of God. They repeated also the beautiful story of Isaac and Rebekah, the tales about Jacob, and, best of them all, the one about the boy Joseph, with his coat of many colors. To this period belong primitive songs and folklore that grew up about ancient places like Bethel, Jacob's Well, Hebron, Beersheba, and the Oak of Moreh. All of the places were precious in the memory of the people because of what happened in and about them.

This long period begins with Abraham and ends with Moses. No doubt writing was practiced by tribal chieftains and other leaders, but so far as we know no written records were made. It was the period of lore and tradition and extends from 1900 (?) B. C. to the time of Moses, about 1200 B. C.

The Period of the Conquest

This period begins with the Exodus out of Egypt, about 1250 B. C., and extends to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul and David in the eleventh century B. C. During it the Jews were making history, and consequently many things could be recorded. Such facts as their enslavement in Egypt, deliverance from it, wanderings in the wilderness, settlement at Kadesh, the receiving of the Law, and their Covenant at Horeb with God, made interesting material to preserve. Then, too,

there were the great stories, to which we have already referred, that should be kept for future generations. The Bible tells us in many places that Moses, who was well educated, wrote these things down, and so became the first contributor to the book that we value so much.

After Moses there came at least two other persons who helped to write and preserve the literature of the people, namely, Joshua and Samuel. To them we owe the interesting accounts about the Conquest of Canaan and the period of the Judges.

What, then, does this period give us of the Bible? What have we now that was first written and preserved in that age so long ago?

Memoirs of great persons.—Every people has its great heroes. We have ours; so do England, France, Germany, Rome, and Greece. The Jews had many of them from the very beginning of their history. These have been preserved to us by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. Their original writings are gone but what they wrote remains. Consequently, we have the stories about the Patriarchs and the Judges. This period gives us the stories about Samson and his feats of strength, Gideon and his victories, Deborah and her patriotism. We have also the beautiful stories about Samuel and his mother and how, through her devotion to God, her boy became a great judge. Many of the stories that we can recall about Saul, David, Jonathan, and others, also belong to this period.

Codes of law.—The laws and commandments which are in our Bible were first written during this period. Moses, often called the Lawgiver, wrote these down by the special command of God.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.—Exodus 34: 27.

Perhaps one reason why we have these ancient laws is due to the fact that special means were employed for their protection. How were they kept? The Bible tells us that Moses made an ark (see Exodus 37) in which the law of God was kept. Besides, fathers and mothers taught them to their children. The Ten Commandments, for example, were recited in much the same way that we do to-day, by counting off the fingers from one to ten. Then there were laws concerning public worship, sacrifice, and prayer. There were rules about personal cleanliness, the preparation of food, regulating life in camp, and the conduct of the home. Besides these there were laws regulating justice, protecting property, widows, orphans, the poor, foreigners, servants, animals and birds, and old persons.

Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry.—Exodus 22: 22, 23.

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. . . . Thou shalt love him as thyself.—Leviticus 19: 33, 34.

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.—Leviticus 19: 32.

Collections of poetry.—In several places in the Bible reference is made to books which were in

existence in this period, but are now lost. Some of them are books of poetry and royal annals. In Joshua 10: 13 is mentioned the Book of Jasher, which was a poetical composition of great events in the history of the people, and cherished up to the time of the writing of Joshua. Another book of like character is referred to in Numbers 21: 14 and called the Book of the Wars of Jehovah. It also is poetry. Still others are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 29: 29, where reference is made to the History of Samuel the Seer, the History of Nathan the prophet, and the History of Gad the Seer.

This period, then, was a fruitful one in the writing of biblical material. When David, for instance, became king such were the sacred writings he had. He possessed no Bible in our sense of the term, but he and his people had much of the ancient lore, literature, and laws that have come to us. How all this material was edited, copied, and used in the formation of our Bible we will see later.

The Bible in the Monarchies

When the Jews wished to be like other people and organized themselves into a monarchy, special attention was given to literature. Beginning with David, if not before, there were official chroniclers, a part of whose work it was to preserve their history. Had the Jews always been a united people, perhaps the story of how the Bible came to be would be simpler and more connected. But after the brilliant reigns of David and Solomon occurred a division, and the people became two kingdoms: the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel.

Both kingdoms developed their own literature, so that at this point we face another period in the making of the Bible.

The Bible of Judah.—Soon after Judah began its separate career, a great prophet, probably a companion of Elijah, but whose name we do not know, took it upon himself to prepare a connected story of God's dealings with the Jews. How do you suppose he proceeded to the task? This is what he did: He acquainted himself with all the materials at hand, visited old towns and conferred with aged men and prophets, and then wrote his book. He gleaned and used the stories the people loved, he reviewed the writings of Moses, Joshua, Samuel and others, and produced, according to Dr. J. Patterson Smyth, "our first written version of the Pentateuch story." This production is known as the Jahvist, or Jehovist document, because "Jehovah" is the word it used when it referred to God. This collection was made in the ninth century B. C. and, except for the parts that appear in our present Bible, is lost.

The Bible of Israel.—Now, how about the kingdom of Israel? It was not to be outdone by the kingdom of Judah, and so, early in the eighth century B. C., probably when Amos and Hosea were championing the cause of God among the people, a group of prophets made a collection of sacred writings. They proceeded in the same way, but made more of the commandments and laws, and God's covenants, as a basis for their work. The writer, or writers, used the same material that was available to the kingdom of Judah and produced a connected story which begins with Genesis 15

and parallels the Jahvist Bible. However, in this document the word "Elohim" was used to designate God, and therefore it is known as the Elohist document. This, also, was used later in the making of our Bible, but has long since disappeared.

Deuteronomy.—It was in the reign of Hezekiah (715–686), who was one of the great and good kings of Judah, that great religious reforms were made. He improved the Temple, restored public worship, and removed idolatry as much as possible. The Bible says of him:

> **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.—2 Chronicles 29: 2.**

Under his influence and encouragement, together with the support given by Isaiah and Micah, someone, who was probably in exile, took up Israel's history. Whoever it was, he devoted himself to the writings of Moses, the laws which he gave and the customs which he established. He made use of other books, such as we described before, and produced a work of great excellence. This book is Deuteronomy and remains with us to this day.

For a long time it had disappeared, but was recovered in the fifteenth year of King Josiah, about 621 B. C. After it was found it almost instantly became a great factor in the life of the people. How it was discovered while carpenters and builders were repairing the Temple is recorded in 2 Kings 22. In that account are these lines:

> **And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan**

the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.

And Shaphan read it before the king.

And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.
—2 Kings 22: 8, 10, 11.

This story deserves frequent reading, for it presents one of the most important events in the coming of the Bible to us.

Résumé of Period

Thus at the close of this period, which ends with the beginning of the exile, there is no Bible. Of religious literature, however, there is a great deal, though not equally valuable. The Law of Moses has first place, and its finest expression, up to this point, is the book of Deuteronomy. The sacred collections made by Judah and Israel are known and in the hands of the prophets and the priests. The stories about the patriarchs and the Judges, including the records of the conquest of Canaan, are common property. There is considerable poetry, some of which has been used in public worship. Besides these there are oral and fragmentary written records of prophetic writings, but they have not yet been accepted as Scripture. The Bible is still in the making and another period is needed to complete it. What happened in that day we shall see next.

Study Topics

1. What Bible material was available during the period of lore and tradition? Recall some of the stories.
2. Did you ever spend an evening around a camp fire?

Were there any stories told? For a long time the Jews lived a nomadic life. Do you suppose they told stories around their camp fires? Do you know any of them?

3. What persons made the first written contributions to the Bible? What did they write about? If Moses was one of them, what did he record?
4. When the Jews became a divided people, what efforts were made to preserve their literature?
5. How much of a Bible did David have? Review the Period of the Conquest to ascertain this.
6. Are there any poetical books in the Bible? Were any written which are now lost?
7. Tell the story of King Josiah and the discovery of the Law in the Temple. See 2 Kings 22.

For Further Study

See Grubb's *The Bible: Its Nature*, etc., pages 57–60.
Smyth, *The Bible in the Making*, pages 85–112.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
Gray's *Critical Introduction to Old Testament*, pages 3ff.

CHAPTER VI

LATER OLD TESTAMENT COLLECTIONS

The Jews faced many hardships during their long history. The greatest occurred when their national life was destroyed and they were taken into captivity. This disaster came in two terrible blows: the first in 722 B. C., when Samaria fell; the second in 586 B. C., when Jerusalem suffered a like fate.

The Bible During the Exile

But in this time of humiliation and trial the unconquerable spirit of the Jews asserted itself. Especially was this true of their leaders and prophets. One by one they rose up to point the faces of the people forward, and in order that they might have courage to do so, reminded them of God's goodness in the past. In rendering this service the unexpected happened: the Old Testament was finally collected and preserved for all time.

The Bible of the priests.—This was made during the captivity and was the work of priests. They took up the history of the people from the creation to the conquest of Canaan. It was written from the standpoint of religion and reflects the patriotic zeal and spiritual devotion of the writers. Great scholars tell us that from this work our Pentateuch got the main part of its laws. To this document we owe the stately creation story in the first chapter

of Genesis and the carefully prepared chronologies and genealogies that follow. From it were derived nearly the whole of Leviticus, the beginning of Numbers, and the concluding portions of Exodus. Of the lost collections—for this also is lost—this was the most spiritual and literary in style. This work was done in the fifth century B. C., and gave final form to our Pentateuch.

The Bible under Ezra and Nehemiah.—How this work was introduced to the people is of interest. The story is told in Nehemiah 8 and Ezra 7. Ezra, we are told, went to Jerusalem from Babylon in 457 B. C., to guide and comfort the people. He took the book with him and this is what happened:

> **And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.—Nehemiah 8: 1.**

Ezra read the Law to them, with the result that it caused a revival. The people rededicated themselves to the service of God and entered into a covenant never again to forsake his laws. The book Ezra read was the Pentateuch, which became the Bible of the people for centuries and was referred to as the Law.

The law and prophets.—In this period of religious revival another thing happened: Ezra formed a circle of kindred spirits to devote itself to the study and preservation of sacred writings. This is sometimes referred to as the Great Synagogue. This body acquainted itself with the addresses and writings of prophets like Amos,

Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and others. Its members brought together, copied, edited, and arranged their writings. For more than two centuries this kind of work was done, so that by 250 B. C. the Bible had two parts, namely, The Law and The Prophets. A little later these books, all of which are in our Bible, received official recognition as the inspired Word of God, as we see in the book of Daniel, where are these words:

> **I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.—Daniel 9: 2.**

When this devout Jew read the Old Testament he had books in his collection that were not in those documents which Ezra and Nehemiah had. Evidently, something had happened in the meantime. It was this: by the time of Daniel the messages, sermons, and writings of the prophets had been brought together and were considered sacred and placed by the side of the Pentateuch.

The Wisdom Books.—In our Bible are still other books, not mentioned in our review of collections which were made. Among them are Proverbs, Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. How did these get into the Bible? It was largely the work of these great men that compiled the prophets, or by others who were under their guidance. At all events they got into the Bible by 200 B. C., for by that time the Scriptures are referred to as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. They are so referred to in another book, not in our Bible, but which was well known. It

was written about 200 B. C. and was entitled "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach." In it is this reference to the Scriptures:

> **"My grandfather, Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the Law, and the Prophets, *and the other writings of our fathers,* was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom."**

So we see from this that just before the great Christian era began, the Old Testament was completed, and later, through the Greek and Latin languages, got into the hands of the people.

The apocryphal books.—Another type of books grew up at about the time that the Old Testament was completed. While they do not have a place in our Bible, the story of how the Bible came to be would not be complete without a passing reference to them.

They are known as the apocryphal books, because their writings are "hidden" and "mysterious." If you have ever read the book of Daniel, you can understand what they are like. They are allegorical in character and abound in visions, dreams, and imagery.

They are important because they show what the Jews were thinking about in the centuries just before the Christian era. They are full of hope and expectation and make many allusions to the coming of the Messiah. There are fourteen of them, and the following are perhaps best known: Tobit, The Song of the Three Children, Bel and The Dragon. The entire list is in the Bible of Roman Catholics, but is not included in our own.

Stages in Bible Making Recalled

What, then, were the stages in the making of the Old Testament as we have studied the question thus far? They have been indicated before, but a brief summary now will help us to remember them. They are as follows:

1. *The Period of Folk-lore and Legend.* In it there were few, if any, written records. Bible literature was being produced, but passed on by word of mouth. The period begins with the patriarchs and ends with the appearance of Moses, about 1250 B. C.

2. *The Period of the Conquest*, in which Moses, Joshua, Samuel and others produced songs, annals, rules, and customs. It includes the period of the Judges, whose heroes are portrayed. It extends from the Exodus, about 1250 B. C., to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul and David, in the eleventh century B. C.

3. *The Period of the Monarchies*, extending from the eleventh century B. C. to the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C. In it were prepared the Bible of Judah and the Bible of Israel, together with poetic collections like the books of Jasher and The Wars of Jehovah. Psalmody also began under David. The prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah delivered their messages, which, however, were edited and collected later. The great work of this period was the writing of Deuteronomy.

4. *The Exile and The Return.* Comprising the time between the fall of Samaria, 722 B. C., and of Jerusalem, 586 B. C., to the second century B. C. During this period the Pentateuch was completed,

the prophets were collected and edited, and the Wisdom Literature added. Many apocryphal books were written, but which are not in our Bible. It was a period of great literary activity and resulted in the complete Old Testament, now in our possession.

God in the Process

Very hastily we have reviewed what took twelve centuries to produce. That the Old Testament is here at all moves us with wonder. Somehow we are led to feel that the hand of God was in the making of it, for nothing important in the literature of the Jews is allowed to be lost. As the centuries come and go, the best comes rising to the top, the wheat is winnowed from the chaff, until ultimately it is not merely recognized but accepted as sacred. So true is this that Josephus wrote as follows:

"All Jews are instinctively led from the moment of their birth to regard them as decrees of God, and to abide by them and, if need be, gladly die for them."

At this we are not surprised. The Bible is the book of God's love to the world. He wanted humanity to know him better, and so he followed it through its long history, that it might become the comfort and inspiration of all. It is our heritage: if we appropriate its wisdom and truth, God will make our way to prosper and we shall have good success.

Study Topics

1. How many periods of Bible growth have we indicated in the last two chapters? Name them and give their dates.

2. What effect did the exile have upon the Jews? Were they interested in their sacred writings, or did they neglect them?
3. Were there any efforts made during the exile to collect the sacred writings? How about the Priest's Bible?
4. Tell the story of Ezra reading the Law. Find it in Nehemiah 8 and Ezra 7.
5. Under the influence of Ezra and the Great Synagogue what happened?
6. About what time before Christ were the Old Testament collections completed?

For Further Study

Grubb's *The Bible: Its Nature*, etc., pages 98–109, 117–133.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 73–75.
Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* Chapters IV and V.
Smyth's *Old Documents and the New Bible*, pages 57–70.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON WAS DETERMINED

To appreciate what is meant by "canon," when associated with the Old Testament, it is necessary to define the word. In the Greek, from which it is derived, it signifies a measuring rod, and later a rule, or standard. Subsequently, the rules that grew up to establish literary taste, social conduct, and the pursuit of art, were known as "canons." When the word is applied to the Bible it refers to the process by which its writings were selected, marked off as sacred, and finally considered a rule of faith and conduct.

How this happened we know only in part. The needs of the people, however, had much to do with it, as this chapter will indicate.

The Exile a Blessing in Disguise

With the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, in July, 586 B. C., the Jews were taken into captivity. There they were subjected to great hardships. Some of them, especially the poorer classes, were scattered in various parts of Palestine, but the larger number were carried into Babylon, while others escaped into Egypt. Jerusalem, their capital city, was demolished and the Temple burned. To add to their humiliation, many leading persons

were imprisoned, and others, including prophets and priests, were put to death. Consequently, they faced the future with shaken faith and forlorn hope.

Jeremiah, who was one of the exiles, gives us a vivid description, as follows:

> **How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: . . .**
>
> **Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. —Lamentations 1: 1, 2, 12.**

Such were the terrible experiences through which the Jews had to pass. They were far from home, and there, while in contact with other civilizations having different standards of life and strange customs, longed for their own altars and temples.

Their eyes were opened.—In this deplorable condition the eyes of the captives were opened and they began to see how good God had been to them in the centuries past. They recalled, what they had often forgotten, the covenants that in former days had been made with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and others. There came to mind the fearless and comforting words of the prophets, who often faced death rather than be disloyal to God. In other words, in a far-away land they learned to appreciate home. Bereft of their native climes, they cherished them more. When denied drink from their own wells and springs, they lan-

guished for them. In this state of heart they needed help, and this they got by returning to the faith of their fathers.

The comfort of the prophets.—Fortunately, the Jews received comfort from their prophets. Jeremiah, for example, shared their sufferings, and especially comforted those who were exiled in Egypt. He spoke to them with words like these:

> **Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.—Jeremiah 42: 11.**

Such a friend also was Ezekiel, who cared for them like a pastor that makes the burdens and trials of the people his own. Everywhere he went with messages of consolation and hope. He told them that God had not forgotten their misery, and would certainly come to save them.

> **I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.—Ezekiel 34: 16.**

> **And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.—Ezekiel 36: 28.**

There was still another prophet in the exile, whose voice did not fail the people in their distress. What his words were like we can ascertain by turning to Isaiah 40–55. In all the Bible there are no finer passages, many of which urge the people to have faith in God:

> **Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—Isaiah 40: 1.**

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.—Isaiah 42: 6.

All these efforts of the prophets led to the same result. They discovered that comfort could not be given the people without referring to their country's remarkable literature. And this return to their literature made the Old Testament a necessity.

Literary activity.—There was, therefore, great literary activity. The thoughtful and wiser exiles saw the necessity of collecting the sacred writings and produced, as we saw in the previous chapter, the book of Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch and a collection of the prophets. Much of this work was done under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra. Especially the latter became the organizer of a force of men who made it their purpose to edit, rewrite, and preserve sacred writings. This was the Great Synagogue, very likely formed on that great day when Ezra read the Law and explained it to the people. At all events the leaders made a covenant which they signed pledging themselves to obey the Law of God.

To walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes.—Nehemiah 10: 29.

On that day, according to Jewish tradition, this venerable body dedicated itself to the task of collecting and preserving the Scriptures. Among its leaders were Ezra, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah,

Malachi, Zerubbabel, and others. With the death of Simon the Just, the last member, its work ended. That such a body of deeply religious men, dedicated to such a holy task, received the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit cannot for a moment be questioned. "By this group," writes Dr. J. Patterson Smyth, "was determined what writings were inspired and what were not. By their wisdom the pronunciation of the words was fixed, and careful rules for writing and interpretation were made to safeguard the accuracy of the inspired Word. The authorship of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Minor Prophets; the change from the ancient Hebrew to the present square writing; the foundation of colleges for biblical study; . . . the Jews delight to associate with the name of Ezra and his famous synagogue."

Popularizing the Old Testament

When Ezra read the Law to the people he had to explain it—"give the sense." The Law was in a language they no longer understood, so that it had to be explained in Aramaic, which had become the language of the people. Many things like this had to be done for them in order to make the Old Testament their own. Among them are the following:

Schools multiplied.—Under wise leadership the Jews were influenced to give heart and soul to their sacred writings and history. They were inspired to study them in centers of learning that grew up here and there. These schools began to multiply shortly after Jerusalem fell and continued for many

years. In them the Scriptures were studied with patriotic zeal and true religious devotion. Notable among them were the ones at Japhneh, Lydda, and Cæsarea. The one of greatest renown was located at Tiberias, whose scholars were men of great learning. Through the unselfish service of these schools the Old Testament writings were endeared to and preserved for the people.

The Targums.—As early as 400 B. C. explanatory notes on the Law were written. This was done partly because the ancient Hebrew of the people was no longer understood and also because many centuries of life had passed and much of their history was forgotten. Jewish leaders therefore wrote commentaries, which explained the law in the light of the past. These works multiplied greatly and later threatened to overshadow the Scriptures. They were known as *Targums*, and had wide use. Jesus himself, no doubt, quite often heard the rabbi at Nazareth read them and knew how great rabbis interpreted the Law.

The Massoretes.—As the Old Testament literature began to circulate among the people and was used each Sabbath in the synagogues, the desire arose to keep it pure and, so far as possible, inerrant. Therefore the rolls and skins upon which the Scriptures were transcribed were the constant object of scrutiny. As early as 300 B. C., if not earlier, scribes gave prayerful and skilled attention to the copying and preservation of manuscripts. The men who collected them were called *Massoretes*. They did their work so well that few corruptions in texts occurred and seldom were mistakes made in copying. Through their efforts

the people got correct copies of the Old Testament, and schools and synagogues had uniform texts.

The Septuagint.—In the third century B. C. Alexander the Great was making history. He was a great military genius and with his armies subjugated Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt. Greek became the official language and later the tongue of cultured society. The Jews residing in Northern Africa, in Egypt, and elsewhere, adopted the Greek and in several generations many of them forgot the tongue of their fathers. This condition led to the translation of the Old Testament into Greek.

The legend that grew up around this translation is so arresting and beautiful that it is worth looking up in encyclopædias or works of history. It occurred about 200 B. C. and was the work of seventy-two elders and scholars, who were sent to Alexandria in Egypt for the task. The work won immediate acceptance and became popular. It was in use when the Saviour was born and he and his followers knew it better than any other text.

The Palestine text.—While the Septuagint was very popular among the Greek speaking Jews, it must be remembered that there was still another collection very precious to the patriotic Jews living in Palestine. It is known as the Palestine text and can be traced to the Great Synagogue under Ezra. It is considered the most accurate, because it was always in the hands of scholarly priests and scribes who watched and guarded it with great care.

By such means as these which we have indicated, the Old Testament became the property of the

people, who in turn by reading and studying it were prepared for the next great event in the religious life of humanity—the coming of the Messiah.

The Finished Work

Thus in this and preceding chapters we have traced the development of the Old Testament. In its making and growth we have seen many centuries come and go, and observed dynasties rise and fall. Chaldea came to power and wielded her scepter, but finally had to capitulate to the Persians. Persia fell before Alexander the Great, whose will and law ruled the world. We have seen the vicissitudes and changing fortunes of the Jews. But through all this endless round of circumstance the Spirit of God was guarding his truth. From the simple covenant made with Abraham in Ur of Chaldea, the word expanded and grew until in the Septuagint and the Palestinian texts, it presents the most remarkable literary achievement of mankind.

Study Topics

1. When Jerusalem fell in 586 B. C., what became of the Jewish nation and its people? In captivity did they *turn to* or *away from* God?
2. Who were some of the great leaders that gave them comfort? Can you recall any of their comforting words?
3. There was great literary activity in the exile; what were the definite results of that activity?
4. What means were used to bring the Old Testament to the people? Recall discussion of this chapter.
5. Have some one report on the Septuagint and how the

translation came to be made. See *Encyclopædia Britannica* or Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

6. What contribution did the Great Synagogue make to the Old Testament?

For Further Study

Grubb's *The Bible: Its Nature*, etc., pages 78–79.
Smyth's *The Bible in the Making*, pages 109ff.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 72ff.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 27ff.
Smyth's *Old Documents and the New Bible*, pages 60ff.
Sanders' *History of the Hebrews*, pages 210ff.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

In the third chapter of this book we saw that the unity of the Bible consisted in the unfolding of a great love. We observe that love is purposeful: it plans and works for the welfare of those to whom it is attached. This truth is beautifully brought out in the Bible in connection with God providing a Saviour for the world. That there should be a Saviour in some way was made known to the Jews. A long time before the Messiah came people looked for him. Centuries before the angels heralded his birth in Bethlehem prophets said he would come. Devout Jews prayed that he might come soon, and when he did not appear, they still *hoped*. Their hope was so intense and persistent that its influence is felt almost everywhere in the Old Testament.

The Hope and Its History

How, then, did the Messianic hope originate, grow and expand? To know this is necessary to a full understanding of the Old Testament, and, furthermore, it will help us to account for the New. In other words, we cannot appreciate the unusual character of the Bible apart from the Messianic hope and its fulfillment in Jesus.

Its origin.—No one can tell when the hope for

a Messiah began. However, it had its rise quite early in the life of the Jews. Possibly it originated when they began to think about the evil which is in the world. Some great scholars feel that way about it. Sin troubled them. It was their great problem. When they contemplated it they wondered how man could ever be delivered from its painful consequences. The light came to them as they wrestled with the question, and somehow in a vague way realized that God would find a way out. Who first got this assurance from God we do not know, but Moses was perhaps one of the first to write it down. At all events the earliest reference to it is in Genesis, where it appears like a piece of "Good News," and definitely promises that *good* and not *evil* will be supreme in the life of man.

> **I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—Genesis 3:15.**

God's promise to Abraham.—The story of Abraham and how God set him apart to be a blessing to humanity has much to do with the Messianic hope. Recall, for example, these lines:

> **Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:**
>
> **And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.—Genesis 12:1, 2.**

This promise greatly influenced the Jews. They often referred to it and were strengthened whenever they did so. There were times when they

seemed to forget the significance of it as a people; but their great leaders never forgot. They always felt that their race had an unusual mission, and the feeling sustained them a thousand times in those days when things went wrong and they were oppressed by their enemies. So we find that Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and others frequently called the people together to remind them of God's promise and to inspire loyalty to it. Fortunately for the Jews, this made them a hopeful people, and in the course of the centuries their hopefulness came to assume very definite ideas.

Associated with David's house.—By the time David became king the Jews felt that a great future would be theirs. Especially were they encouraged when they saw their country prosper under David. David himself was impressed by the hope, and prayed God that his house might continue forever. God honored his desire and assured him through Nathan, the prophet, that his kingdom would endure.

> **He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever.—2 Samuel 7: 13.**

This word of hope David never forgot. In his farewell address to the people, recorded in 2 Samuel 23, he recalls it and exhorts his subjects to be faithful.

At first not much was made of this promise and it was not until the Jews came in conflict with the Assyrians that it was stressed. Then, while under the heel of the conqueror and they were cut down like the cedars of Lebanon, Isaiah rose up as a

mighty herald voicing the hope that they would not suffer ultimate defeat.

> **There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:**
> **And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.—Isaiah 11: 1, 2.**

He was even more hopeful than this when he prophesied as follows:

> **Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9: 6.**

Other examples of this hope and how it persisted in the face of adversity might be cited, but these will do. However, it must be noted that this hope so wonderfully voiced by Isaiah was not realized in his day: the Messiah did not come until nearly five hundred years later, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa. Before his birth occurred, the hope entertained by Isaiah, while subjected to changes, continued to grow and expand.

Suffering servant.—We have already seen in another connection how the exile proved to be a blessing to the Jews. In nothing more than in their hope for a Messiah. There were times when the Messiah they looked for was to be a King, only greater than any other they knew. He was to be a great conqueror, mighty in war and majestic in

peace. But in their need and helplessness while in captivity their ideas about the Messiah were refined. In the midst of suffering they learned that the only Messiah that could help them was one who knew their sorrow and shared it, bore their sickness and healed them, understood their travail and gave them peace. So their prophets began to think of a Messiah as "one who serves" and makes great sacrifices.

> **He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**
>
> **He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.—Isaiah 53: 3, 5.**

From this picture we see how the Messianic hope persists, but changes in concept as the years roll by. God is helping the people to understand what kind of a Saviour to expect. The Messiah was to be the world's Sin-bearer; by his stripes it is to be freed.

A glorious future.—The Messianic hope voiced itself in many forms. One was that which had to do with a glorious future. It came to some of the people during the captivity, but had its finest voice in Ezekiel. Jeremiah also shared it. Prophets like these said that a new day would come, a kingdom of peace and righteousness would be established, and the hopes of the people realized. Some believed that after a period of trial and discipline Jerusalem would again be the center of a new king-

dom and in which a Prince from the house of David would rule. What the prophets said can be gleaned from the latter portions of Isaiah, where are some of the most assuring words ever written.

> **Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.**
>
> **Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever.—Isaiah 60: 1, 21.**

> **For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.—Isaiah 62: 1.**

With such words the people and the prophets sustained each other. There was to be a Messiah, but their ideas concerning him were not always the same. But he was to come and to that end they continued to hope. Indeed, their hope was so engaging that, according to Josephus, "pretended Messiahs appeared and succeeded in leading many away."

This Hope and the Bible

But why should we be interested in this hope? It has helped to make the Bible the inspiring book that it is. Everywhere the Old Testament reflects the Messianic hope of the Jews. Their sacred writings could not have been written without being affected by it. Just as one writing a letter betrays his love, his joy, his faith, or his success, so it is here. The Messiah was on the heart of the Jews, and so he got into their literature. It could not

have been otherwise. The Messianic hope runs like a golden thread through the Old Testament Scriptures and has its consummation in Jesus. This makes the Bible the imperishable work that it is. There is nothing else like it in all the literature of humanity. No other writings so reveal the searching tenderness, the holy insight, the relentless love of God, our greatest and best Friend. This is largely due to the Messianic hope which gives plot and purpose to the Bible. When we study its unfolding, we get the impression of a great and mighty movement in the Bible which, like a theme in a musical composition, moves forward to a grand *finale* in the angel chorus on the Palestinian hills announcing that Immanuel has come. The Bible centers in Christ, who fulfills the Messianic dream and satisfies the undying hope of man.

Study Topics

1. To what extent do our hopes affect us in our living? Do you think you could entertain a great hope and keep it hidden? Would it affect your work, your writing?
2. We have observed in this chapter that for centuries the Jews hoped for a Messiah. How did this influence their literature?
3. Did Jesus think of himself as the "Good Shepherd" or the "Servant of people," or as the "Great Physician"? Were there ever prophecies that he was to be like that? Read Isaiah 40, Ezekiel 34, and Isaiah 53.
4. Recall the various conceptions the Jews had about the Messiah and what he would do at his appearing.

5. Do you think that the Messiah has come, or are we looking for another? Are the Jews at the present day hoping for another?

For Further Study

Grubb's *The Bible*, etc., pages 137–140.
Squire's *God Revealing His Truth*, page 242.
Davidson's *Old Testament Prophecy*, chapters on "Messianic Hope."
Scott's *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, pages 29–57.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article on "The Messiah."
Sanders' *Old Testament Prophecy*, pages 81ff.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE MAKING

The New Testament did not come to us ready made. It came in a more wonderful manner than that: it was made in human life and experience. Men and women had to come and go, events had to be woven into the warp and woof of history, new programs had to be launched and partially realized before it could be written, used, and accepted.

It came about most naturally. When the Saviour ascended on high, his followers remained to continue the work which he began. Groups of the faithful were scattered here and there, but they met frequently for fellowship and instruction. At such times they recalled many of the things the Lord had said and done. They talked to each other about Jesus and made his goodness known to others. Those churches that were fortunate enough to have some of the Saviour's disciples to guide them had the advantage over the rest in keeping the picture of Christ fresh and his memory green. But there came a time, as we are told in the Acts, when the Christians were scattered abroad through persetion, and apostolic oversight became more difficult. Then, as never before, they needed the words of the Master to help them. If they could not be had from those who saw and heard him, nothing

would satisfy them like some written report, however brief and meager it might be.

The early Christians used the Old Testament in their gatherings, especially those portions that foretold the coming of the Messiah. After singing from the Psalter, which they always did, their meetings were devoted to testimony about Jesus, and what he had done for them. Through such services as these, and for other reasons which will be stated later, the New Testament had to come.

Needs That Necessitated It

There is an old saying which is frequently quoted, namely, "Necessity is the mother of invention." This old adage may have a wider application. Necessity is the mother of progress. Civilization advances in the measure that it meets and satisfies new needs that arise. Necessity caused the New Testament.

Unwilling to forget Jesus.—Our Christian forefathers could not forget Jesus. He had done too much for them. But if they were to keep the recollection of him fresh, they increasingly felt the need of his wise sayings, his words of love, and his wayside parables. Especially was there need of his revelation of God the Father and of himself as the Son of God. What was done in this respect forms a memorable chapter in the making of the New Testament.

Needed to convince others.—Christianity is a religion of conquest. Its ambition is to draw into its embrace struggling men and nations. It aims at nothing less than the salvation of the world.

To succeed in such a program, the early Christians learned only too soon that they had to give a reason for their faith *in* and account for their devotion *to* Jesus Christ. The wise and cultured Greek had to be convinced, the hard and exact Roman had to be won over, and even their own kith and kin had to be enlightened. In the measure that they enlisted in this service, the teachings of the Master became indispensable.

Training the young.—Jesus was the friend of children. No one ever before or since thought so tenderly of them or ministered so unselfishly on their behalf. The church early in its history tried to express and perpetuate the Saviour's spirit in the concern it manifested in training young people for church membership. Consequently, there were communicants' classes to prepare for participation in the Lord's Supper and other privileges of the church. But to do this work well more than the Old Testament writings were needed. Nothing would do but the teaching of the Lord himself.

Comfort needed.—The early Christians had not gone far in their way when they saw their need of comfort. Jesus, when living among them, was always a fortifying presence. It was easier to be strong when he was around. Sin was less formidable when his words sounded in their ears. So they languished for those silent and beneficent influences that were his, and they were not content until his memorable words and deeds were recorded and in their possession.

Such needs as these, and others that might be referred to, had everything to do with the making of the New Testament. If we keep this in mind,

it will help us to appreciate its pages, which not only portray the Saviour to us, but indicate what he wants done in the world.

Stages in the Formation of New Testament

Before we have the New Testament there is first a community of Christian people who need it. Because they were folk just like ourselves, with hearts and wills that needed comfort and strength, a body of Christian literature developed. The writers of this literature never dreamed that what they were producing would some time be cherished as Scripture and constitute the most inspiring portions of our Bible. God saw to that. The various steps in the process are as follows:

Oral gospel.—In olden times, when books were few, many things passed from one to another by word of mouth. Much was made of public testimony. Indeed, the early Christians seldom came together but they endeavored to edify each other in this way. The word "edify" is significant: it means "to build up," "to make strong." At first they were so happy in their Christian life that hearsay sufficed. So long as they could recall his outstanding sayings they had no need of books. They trusted their memories, and made their gatherings testimony meetings.

What the words were which they used we can quite readily surmise. They surely were those that contained the largest measure of comfort for those who were in trouble and reminded them of Jesus' power and sympathy, the assurance of pardon, peace, and spiritual power for all who would turn from their

sins and trust in him as Saviour. Very likely they were the words that young people repeat now in their Junior and Senior societies. In addition to them, they could not forget his stories and parables. These no one, after at least one reading, ever forgets: they are so human, sympathetic and refreshing.

The period in which these oral sayings were rehearsed continued for nearly a quarter of a century after the Lord's ascension and comprises the first stage in the Making of the New Testament.

The Epistles.—The New Testament opens with the Gospels, and rightly so, because they constitute a biography of our Lord: but they are not the first books that were written. The first to claim this distinction are the letters that were written by the first great and outstanding missionary, Saint Paul.

Here was a man who was in his way like the Saviour: he went about doing good. He was not satisfied by merely preaching Jesus: he went a step further and organized churches. These after a little while needed advice and counsel, for problems of every description arose.

The first thus written to meet a need are the Epistles to the Thessalonians. This was done by the help of Silvanus and Timothy, who were associated with Paul, in the year 48 A. D. Think of what an event it must have been in the little church at Thessalonica, when the first letter arrived! The church must have been full of commotion as the news spread, and a great hearing no doubt was given it. It came from the great champion of the new religion, and its appearance was like a dash of sunshine.

Other needs arose in the churches located in Palestine and Asia Minor, so that in swift succession more letters were written. Among them was the Epistle to the Romans, which was dictated to Tertius, 54 A. D. In the next fifteen or twenty years many more followed, so that by the end of the period Paul could be credited with thirteen, three to Saint John, one to James, probably two to Peter, and one to Jude. The Epistle addressed to the Hebrews, whose authorship is doubtful, belongs to this period.

These writings were widely used. Churches loaned them to each other, and as their teachings took hold of people, copies were made in separate rolls and became treasured possessions of the scattered Christian churches.

Many other letters were written by leaders in the church. Some of them secured wide reading but were not admitted into our New Testament. Among them may be mentioned the following: The Epistle of Clement, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Didache, so called, or the Teaching of Jesus.

The synoptic Gospels.—As stated before, the early Christians wished their portrait of Jesus to be as complete as possible. To meet this desire, there were written many narratives, as Luke informs us at the beginning of his Gospel (Luke 1: 1–4). Between the years 60 and 80 A. D., Matthew, Mark, and Luke appeared.

These are called synoptic Gospels because they are so much alike. They follow, with few exceptions, the same general outline of the Lord's life. The opinion of scholars is that Mark is the oldest,

and that the writers of the first and the third Gospels used it as one of their chief sources. Mark wrote chiefly for Gentile converts, probably to help Roman soldiers, and his style is plain, blunt, and straightforward. He, as no other, gives us a picture of the virile side of Jesus. The Gospel by Luke, who was a physician and a man of polish and evident literary taste, is the most literary of all the Gospels. It reflects a grace and ease of movement that gives the book unmistakable charm. Luke gives us the bright colors in our portrait of the Lord. The Gospel by Matthew, which probably was the best known, was written to indicate to the Jews that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Messianic hope. Matthew, therefore, gives us the vital details of the portrait, and helps us to see that Jesus was indeed the Christ.

To this period belongs also the book of the Acts, whose stirring pages should be read at a single reading in order to get the comprehensive outlines of the primitive church. Being written by Luke, who knew the hardships and trials of the early Christians, it gives us a trustworthy account of the spread of Christianity. In it we see those first mighty movements and spiritual revivals that have helped to make our modern civilization.

The General Epistles.—Between 80 and 100 A. D. many small tracts were written. These are called General or Pastoral Epistles, and were not addressed to a particular church, but to Christians everywhere. Especially did the writers have in mind the Christians who were scattered everywhere, and needed information about the great fundamental truths of the Christian life. The appearance and

acceptance of the General Epistles constitute the fourth stage in the making of the New Testament.

Gospel of John.—This book was written by that disciple that was closest to the Saviour and who knew as no other his heart. It was written by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. As a biography it is full of tenderness and shows us the solicitude and compassion of the Saviour. He gives us the loftiest view of Christ, and wrote it with a very definite purpose, as follows:

> **These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

The composition of this Gospel was not much earlier than 100 A. D., and it is the most deeply religious of them all—which, it must also be added, is characteristic of John's writings throughout.

The Use of These Writings

In such a manner the New Testament came to be written. It was produced in order to provide the early Christians with true accounts of the Saviour's life and teaching, and correct ideas about the work his church needed to do. It reflects the life of the first century in the Christian era, and abounds with picturesque scenes, stirring achievements, and dramatic movements. Behind the New Testament are many devoted hearts who could not forget their Lord and Saviour. He had won them all to his way of living and they were resolved to make others also his followers and disciples. This purpose is reflected everywhere in the New Testa-

ment writings. How they were accepted and made a part of the Bible constitutes the last stage in its making. This will be taken up in the next chapter.

Study Topics

1. Discuss the reasons why the New Testament was ultimately written.
2. From what you know of history, did people other than the Jews have oral literature? How about the Greeks? The Minstrels of Britain?
3. In what order were the New Testament books composed? Which of the books are the most important?
4. If you found yourself in a strange land and among people who never heard of the Saviour, what books of the New Testament would you advise them to read?
5. Which one of the four Gospels is your favorite? Why do you consider it your preference?
6. What occasioned the writing of Paul's Epistles? If they were addressed to particular churches, how did others get them?
7. Why are the first three known as the synoptic Gospels? Whom did Matthew address? Mark? Luke? Which of these has the greatest literary quality?

For Further Study

Hunting's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 77ff.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 40–50.
Smyth's *The Bible in the Making*, pages 165ff.
Goodspeed's *Story of the New Testament*, pages 137–145.
Snowden's *The Making and Meaning of the New Testament*, pages 3–35.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

When we turn to the New Testament portion of the Bible for study or devotional reading, it is easy to imagine that it must always have been. But that is not the case. Before its twenty-seven books had a place in the Bible, the early Christians used the Old Testament, or such parts of it as happened to be available. Copies in Hebrew, Aramaic, and in Greek were read at public meetings, and the Old Testament lesson had first place. From what we know of their devotion to the Law and the Prophets, it did not occur to them that they would ever need or desire other Scriptures. They were satisfied with what they had. But as the years multiplied and Jesus moved back in time, his followers yearned more and more for everything, oral or written, that would keep the Lord vital in their experience. Then the words of Jesus and the story of his work were the great thing. That is what they cared to hear. Consequently, the teachings, acts and ministry of Jesus gradually were put into writing, and the records thus made began to be used wherever Christians could secure them.

How the New Testament books were finally accepted as the inspired word of God and given a place in the Bible, we will now consider.

Picturing the Situation

To appreciate what was done to determine the New Testament canon, it is necessary to picture to ourselves the life and history of the early church. Just as the Constitution of the United States cannot be understood apart from the great events and experiences that produced it, so is it here. We must go back to the century that followed Jesus and see how his followers lived, and note what they suffered, endured, and achieved. A hurried trip—for it must be that—will reveal many interesting facts.

A Spirit-filled church.—Just before Jesus ascended on high he told his followers that his spirit would come into their lives and they would have power to carry on his work.

> **Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Acts 1:8.**

This promise was fulfilled. Beginning with the Day of Pentecost, which is described in the second chapter of the Acts, and for many years after, courage, confidence and cheer marked the life of the Christians. Revivals were common. The Saviour's hopefulness characterized the life of the churches, and they, in spite of many hardships, were happy. They needed no other guide and comfort. They trusted Jesus and felt that he would not fail them. Besides, they were looking for his speedy return. He might come any day, "at evening or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning," to take them

to heaven. With this expectation on their hearts and the kind of faith they had, they planned all their work in a way that would please Jesus and not grieve his presence. When they elected officers they chose, so the Bible tells us, "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost." Their missionaries and preachers planned programs only after meditation and prayer, for they wished the spirit of Jesus to control them.

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.—Acts 8: 29.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.—Acts 13: 2.

With conditions like these in the churches the Christians for quite a number of years felt no need of Scriptures other than what they had. They depended upon the Old Testament and the preaching of the apostles. But this condition could not always continue: a turn in the road was inevitable, and to it they came at length.

Leaders passing out.—The disciples, and many others with them, knew Jesus personally. They knew what he said and did, for they had worked with him. Because of this fact the Christians trusted them and relied on their leadership. There was no occasion to worry. If they needed information about Jesus or his doctrine, it could be easily had. If they were troubled about anything in the church, they knew where to get advice. But when, through persecution and otherwise, the Saviour's personal friends were cut off, a new situation

developed. Then the need for written records arose, and these began to appear, and as a source of comfort and instruction they meant much to the Christians. Some of these writings are now in our Bible, and they got there because they met the spiritual needs of the early Christian Church.

Diverse New Testament literature.—As writings multiplied, it became a problem to know which should be trusted. How did this come about? This condition was caused by the fact that in the course of half a century many persons, as Luke tells us, wrote narratives about Jesus. "There were scraps of writing," says Doctor Smyth, "floating about." Nearly every church had some of them, and though they were only fragments, they were used in public meetings. If any of these writings happened to come from the apostles, they were given preference. As no two churches had an equal number of narratives and documents, the question gradually arose as to what writings should have acceptance and what should not. Especially was this difficulty present in those days when through martyrdom the responsibility for leadership fell upon the shoulders of persons less able to direct the affairs of the church. But this perplexity helped to determine what books should be put into the New Testament and what should be excluded.

The Diatessaron.—In trying to relieve the situation that had arisen, one of the great men of the church conceived the idea of writing a narrative of the Lord's life based on the four Gospels. This book, known as the **Diatessaron,** was written by Tatian about 160 A. D. The word "Diatessaron" means seeing the Life of Jesus *through four books.*

Consequently, the book was an attempt to weave into one continuous story the facts and events narrated in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In this work Tatian was successful and produced a convenient book, which was received with favor in many places. Especially was this true in Syrian churches, where for a long time it was almost exclusively used. But valuable as this book was, there came a time when the four Gospels won chief place in the recognition of the people, and in due time they became a part of the New-Testament canon. The Diatessaron, however, is now all but forgotten.

How the Canon Was Determined

In Chapter VII we saw how the Old-Testament canon was settled. Now let us observe the steps or stages in the formation of the New. How, then, were the value, use, and authority of the New-Testament books determined, so that we consider them a standard, or rule to live by?

Usage had much to do with it.—One thing that helped greatly to determine what books should be accepted in the New Testament was the usage made of the various writings. Those that were used most frequently had the greatest chance to survive. Among the writings thus received were those that dealt most directly with the words and acts of Jesus. Consequently, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were widely used. Churches that were organized by Paul naturally cherished his letters and, therefore, in the course of time they were used in public meetings. Indeed, some of

them were used before the written Gospels had found a hearing in the church. Gradually, through the use made of them, these writings gained authority and preeminence. They were recognized as Scripture and associated with the Old Testament, as a rule of faith and conduct, which is what we mean when we think of them as a canon.

Authorship was important.—There came a time also when authorship was considered important. The feeling arose that if any book was written by an apostle or by some one associated with one, it should be accepted without question. The Christians felt that the apostles had been specially guided by God to write, collect, and preserve the life and deeds of Jesus. They, as no one else, knew the Saviour's heart and could interpret his purpose. Consequently, their writings were widely distributed and greatly honored. What they said was final, and was not to be questioned. By the early part of the second century, therefore, these writings were quoted by the great men in the church and regularly read at public services. Being used in this way helped to their elevation to the rank of Scripture.

Time mattered much.—Time works changes. It rules out what is unessential and holds to what is needed. This happened to the New Testament writings. What the first century of the Christian era could not do was attended to in the second or the third. The process of sifting out the New-Testament books was slow, as the following dates will indicate.

1. *The Year 100 A. D.* By this time all the New Testament books had been written, and they were

copied, quoted, and well distributed. Great men, like Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna, bore testimony to the books by alluding to them in their addresses, sermons, and writings. They speak of them with reverence and value them above their own works, but they do not yet think of them as Scripture. Their high esteem of them, however, later helped to raise them to the level of Scripture.

2. *The Year 140 A. D.* In that year Justin Martyr wrote a defense of Christianity which he addressed to the emperor. In that work, known as his *Apology*, he described the habits and customs of the Christians. He tells us about their Sunday services and what occurred in them. He writes as follows:

"On the day of the Sun [Sunday] all those of us who live in the same town or district assemble together, and there is read to us some part of the Memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the prophets as much as time permits."

This is interesting because it states explicitly that the Gospels were read, together with the Old Testament, thus indicating that in his day the Gospels were definitely recognized.

3. *The Year 170 A. D.* By 170 A. D. the books of the New Testament were carefully listed. This we know from an old document that was discovered in 1740, which goes back to this time. It is known as the Muratorian Fragment, and gives our list of New Testament books, but omits the Epistles of James, First and Second Peter, and the Hebrews. It refers also to other books, some of which are lost, and others of which still remain, but are not

considered as Scripture. During this period, therefore, a great advance was made, and the Gospels and many Epistles were recognized and accepted.

4. *The Year 200 A. D.* Just as a hundred years earlier, so again great men spoke for the church. These were Irenæus of Lyons in southern France, Clement of Alexandria in Egypt, and Tertullian of Carthage in northern Africa. All three of them bear testimony to the use made of the New Testament writings, and indicate that their position beside the Old Testament was assured.

5. *The Third Century.* This century was one of hardship and trial. Persecutions were rife and waged with frenzied ruthlessness. Emperor Diocletian, whose name cannot be forgotten, in the year 302 ordered that Christian churches should be destroyed and their sacred writings burned. The Christians determined that their Scriptures should not be torn from them and suffered greatly in consequence. Because they suffered for them, they valued them more than ever, so that by degrees the New Testament books won a larger place than before and were no longer in doubt. By the year 331 A. D., Constantine, who had embraced Christianity, ordered that fifty copies of the Sacred Scriptures be made, which he desired to present to the church of Constantinople. These were made in the library of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, and they contained exactly our New Testament books. They included also the Apocryphal books of Barnabas and Hermas. By this time, therefore, the New Testament was recognized by both church and state.

6. *The Year 397 A. D.* This is the memorable year in which the New Testament canon was finally

settled at Carthage in Northern Africa, where a great council of the church convened. At that time the church was instructed that "nothing should be read in the church under the title of divine Scripture except those books thus accepted and approved." The list of books thus set apart includes all our New Testament writings and, in addition to them the Apocrypha, which were put in an appendix. Another event that contributed to the result was the translation of the Scriptures into Latin. Saint Jerome, of whom we will learn more, was asked to do this by Pope Damascus. The list of books he used is exactly like ours. By his time the New Testament canon was practically settled.

The Finished Work

Thus has our New Testament come to us. It is the brightest and cheeriest part of our Bible, though the product of suffering and trial. It came into being because the followers of Jesus needed it. Those who wrote it did not know that they were making another Bible to be used with the Old Testament, but that is what happened. As in the Old Testament, so in the New, God's spirit was directing saints and apostles to write what the world needed to know. Out of diverse and chaotic conditions emerged the New Testament, the most perfect work of the spiritual genius of Christianity.

Study Topics

1. How many years transpired in which the New Testament was written and accepted as Scripture? How

does this period compare in length with that required to produce the Old Testament canon?

2. What do you mean by a Scripture canon? See explanation in chapter.
3. Did the early Christians desire a new Bible? How do you account for this?
4. As the apostles died and their leadership was missed, what great need arose? Did this help to produce the New Testament?
5. What did Tatian seek to do when he wrote the Diatessaron? What does the word mean? What does the word "Pentateuch" mean?
6. When the Christians were tortured and persecuted, did they forsake their Scriptures?
7. What great act of Constantine helped to decide our New Testament books?
8. In what year was the New Testament canon finally settled?

For Further Study

Smyth's *The Bible in the Making*, pages 190ff.
Hunting's *Story of Our Bible*, pages 222ff.
Grubb's *The Bible: Its Nature*, etc., pages 27–33.
Gregory's *Canon and Text of New Testament*, pages 7–50.

CHAPTER XI

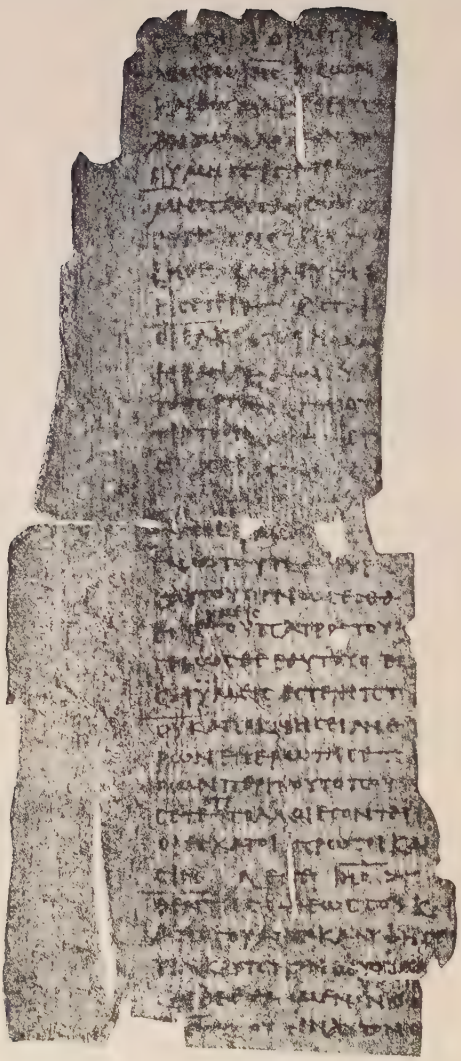
THE TRIALS THROUGH WHICH THE BIBLE CAME

Few books that are worth while have an easy time coming to the light. They have to fight, as it were, their way to recognition. Authors have been known to wait for years with manuscripts that should have had immediate acceptance and found publishers only after considerable effort, disappointment, and privation. This is true of many works that are now considered classics. It is abundantly true of our Bible, which has come to us through the narrow and winding trail of hardship and not along the broad way of sympathy and good will. The Bible is the greatest book we know, but it has been purchased by the price of blood and tears.

What some of its experiences have been in its long journey to our firesides we wish now to indicate.

Mechanical Difficulties

These are hard to visualize. It seems now so easy to print, publish, and market a book that it is difficult to imagine a time when such a task was really laborious. Recently a great hymnal was compiled, placed in the hands of publishers, and within two weeks thousands of copies were on sale. Modern machinery, which made this possi-



NEW "SAYINGS OF JESUS"
Papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, now in the British Museum. See pages 232-233.

ble, works its wonders daily. Some of our papers are circulating libraries in size, yet their contents are set up, printed, and sold within a few hours. Not so did our Bible come to us in its journey through the long and troubled centuries. It was not timed to the beat of a Corliss engine: its progress was slow because it depended upon the strength and skill of the human hand.

Made by hand.—Made by hand! So many things are factory made now that it is almost impossible to imagine the long and weary hours, writer's cramps, and tired eyes that were involved in the writing, copying, and translating of the Bible. It is true, manuscripts are still written by hand, but the paper is so smooth and the script alphabet so fluent that the pen glides almost as fast as thought. Not so in the old days, when the lettering was tedious, the writing material rough, and the task almost endless.

To appreciate how really difficult the task was turn for a moment to the pictures on the opposite page. Note the letters, or characters, used in writing. Remember that the stationery available consisted of bark, wooden tablets, leather, linen, papyrus, and parchment.

Inadequate preservation.—In our studies thus far we have seen that the Bible refers to several books which are now lost. Some of them had already disappeared when the monarchy was established under Saul; many more suffered a like fate during the exile. That this should be so is sometimes disturbing, but can be understood when it is observed that there were no adequate means of preserving them. When a book is published these days, both

the publishers and the nation make it next to impossible to be lost. Every new volume becomes a permanent fixture in modern society. In the National Library at Washington, D. C., it secures a place whenever it is protected by copyright privileges, and publishers see to it that a limited number of copies are distributed to important literary centers. Now, while the Israelites and the early Christians were very anxious about preserving their sacred writings, their mode of dealing with the problem was never adequate. Besides, when we think of the many years of nomadic life and foreign rule to which the Israelites were subjected, and of the many bitter and disappointing experiences through which the Christians passed, we marvel that anything was preserved.

Changes in language.—There is a common expression all of us have used, namely, "The thing is Greek to me." This is a round-about way of saying we do not understand. Well, there have been times when the sacred writings were "Greek" to people simply because they were preserved in a language they no longer used. This was already true four or five hundred years before the Christian era. The priests, who were responsible for the Scriptures, believed the Hebrew text sacred, and in that text kept them as long as possible. So it happened that the great mass of people were not able to read the Word. If they got it at all, it was read to them and then interpreted. This happened a great number of times in the course of history, and whenever it occurred the Word of God did not have a fair chance. There were also times when the reading of the Bible was considered dangerous

for the people, and during the Middle Ages it was forbidden. Men in power prevented translations being made, and had copies which happened to be in circulation among the people destroyed. It is a matter of record that students at Oxford University found it difficult to find Bibles before the days of Wyclif and consequently ignorance as to its contents was widespread. These are examples of the hardships the Bible had to encounter before it became the heritage of mankind.

The Trials of Persecution

Professor Sabatier, of France, says that "the Bible has emerged from every fiery heat a greater and better book." This observation is true. But if we are to get at the significance of the statement, it is necessary to recall some of the "fiery" experiences through which it passed.

Foreign domination.—You know what a proud people we are and how we always use the superlative degree in speaking of ourselves. The Jews were a proud people, and they were never more so than when they suffered. Now, much of the Bible was written when they were subjects of foreign nations and civilizations. There were times when they were persecuted for accepting the teachings of their prophets and ridiculed for adhering to their national traditions. When their kings were vassals of foreign monarchs they often lacked courage to use and enforce what Scriptures they had. One king threw portions of the law in the fire; others, by their severe mandates, forbade prophets to teach it.

Because of facts like these we can understand how it was possible for many of the sacred writings to get lost or to be destroyed. We have already seen that the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B. C. With the destruction of its altars, many precious documents went up in smoke. Prophets and priests were put to death; others into chains. Not until we recall these facts can we appreciate the tremendous task that awaited Ezra, when he and others sought to compile and copy the Law and the Prophets.

To be under foreign domination is always depressing. The Jews found it so. There were times when many of them drifted on the current of life and had no fight in them. They were discouraged. So it happened that in the Persian period many of their traditions and customs were obscured; and there came times of silence when the people lived as though the eye of God was no longer following them in love.

Persecution.—If you have not heard it yet, some day you will hear your pastor use this sentence, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." It is a hard sentence and makes us shudder. Persecution has made the trail of the Bible both hard and glorious. What this means becomes clear when we turn to some of the lurid pages of ancient history. Under Antiochus, about 168 B. C., the Scriptures fared badly. He saw what they meant to the Jews and how they fortified their hearts. Consequently, he insisted on their destruction. A graphic account of what occurred appears in 1 Maccabees 1: 21, 31, 56, 57.

"And Antiochus entered proudly into the Sanc-

tuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof. . . .

"And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side.

"And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire.

"And wheresoever was found with any, the book of the testament, or if any consented to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should be put to death."

Also read the seventy-ninth psalm, which was probably written at this time and refers to the same event. In it are these lines:

O God, the heathen are come unto thy inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth!

Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.

Through such trials as these did the Old Testament pass, and the New Testament fared no better. It had to face Nero's hate and the misguided populace of Rome; the bloody persecutions in southern Gaul in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 A. D.); the rage of Septimius Severus (202 A. D.), who made the acceptance of Christianity unlawful; the systematic attacks of Emperor Decius (249–251); the wholesale murder of bishops, priests, and dea-

cons under Valerian (253–260); and the cyclone of hate that swept over the church while Diocletian was on the throne (284–305). During the latter's reign by special edict all Christian churches were to be destroyed and all their sacred books to be confiscated and burned. A great historian by the name of Eusebius writes of the times as follows:

"I saw with my own eyes the houses of prayer thrown down and razed to their foundations and the inspired and sacred Scriptures consigned to the fire in the open market place."

When we think of these things we no longer marvel at the fact that the original manuscripts and documents of the Bible are no more. The great wonder is that there is a Bible at all.

Its Great Worth

Sometimes our worst enemies are in our own households. Very often more mischief can be done inside a fort than by the foe storming its walls from the outside. There were times when exactly this was the situation our Bible had to face.

Some great mistakes have been made and can be put into a paragraph. The Bible, with its comfort for troubled hours and its light for dark days, has been kept from people. This has been done by keeping it in a language they no longer understood or by failing to preach its great lessons. We know that it has been closeted in monastic walls for scholars and priests when its wisdom and homely counsel should have been preached to the poor and sick at heart. There have been times when it has been used as a "charm book" and made to support innumerable follies. It has been chained

JEREMIAH'S ROLL DESTROYED

See page 99.

to the high places of church altars, when its refreshing should have been turned to those haunts where dwelt the outcasts of the world.

But the Bible's great worth has brought it to a more favorable time, and its pages now delight and comfort people in almost every part of the world. Our purpose next will be to note its contents and then proceed to show how, through the various translations and versions, it finally appeared in our own tongue.

Study Topics

1. Get the derivation of the word "manuscript." How do you prepare your essays or compositions for school? Is it, or is it not laborious? Imagine, now, the experiences of biblical writers.
2. Did you see any manuscripts of known authors the last time you visited the museum? Why have we no original manuscripts of the Scriptures?
3. To what foreign rulers were the Jews in subjection when the Bible was in the making? How did their sacred writings fare then?
4. What was the net effect of persecution upon the New Testament canon?
5. Do you think the Bible will fare better in the future? What leads you to this conclusion?
6. If Christians were persecuted and ordered to deny and destroy the Bible, would they obey? What makes you think so?

For Further Study

Penniman's *A Book About the Bible*, pages 7ff.
Sanders' *History of the Hebrews*, pages 272ff.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 20, 21.
Hunting's *Story of the Bible*, pages 128ff.
Smyth's *Bible in the Making*, pages 133ff.

PART II

THE CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER XII

BOOKS THAT DEAL WITH ORIGINS

In studying those books of the Bible that deal with origins, we include, in addition to the first five of the Old Testament, the book of Joshua. These six books constitute a literary whole and provide a somewhat continuous history of the Hebrews, from the beginning of the race to their settlement in Canaan. They were written and compiled with a religious purpose and, therefore, give information about God, man, and the creation. This information is designed to show how the Hebrew people were raised up to be a spiritual blessing to mankind.

God and Life's Great Questions

We begin life wondering about many things. We are interrogation points and are constantly curious. Who made the world? Where did we come from? What is life? Whither are we going? Who is God? are some of the questions all have asked. The desire to find things out is common to all people and explains why humanity is given to study and investigation.

Mankind has always been like that, and will never be different. Ancient writings in wood and stone, in clay and brick, in fresco and obelisk, bear witness to the fact. Strange and crude stories have

come to us from Chaldea, Babylonia, and Egypt indicating how people thought about life's great questions many centuries before the Old Testament books were written. The Babylonians, for instance, had traditions about the creation. They told how heaven and earth were formed by Marduk, one of their gods, who cleft a woman in two, and made from one half of her the earth, and from the other heaven. Another story states that, finding the earth destitute of animal life, the god Bel commanded one of the gods to cut off his head and mix the earth with the blood and so form animals and vegetation. Others believed the earth was borne on the back of a turtle and that the gods lived among them in all kinds of animals, like the cat, the crocodile, the serpent, the ibis, the ape, the bull, and the scarabus beetle. Some believed that the world was hatched from an egg, while others were equally sure it was the work of a dragon. The troubles of man, some felt, were caused by jealousies and animosities among the gods. Their quarrels affected humanity. There are many more narratives and legends like these, but we do not have space to mention them. We have referred to these simply because they tell us how, in the distant past, folk expressed themselves about the creation, the miseries that darken the world, the hopes that quicken it, and the ends for which it was made.

Fortunately, the Bible deals with these matters and more than any other book gives light. In the book of the Genesis eleven chapters contain the ideas which the Hebrews held about God and the creation, man and his destiny. They appear in

story and narrative and have been told for many centuries. What, then, are the things they tell us about?

1. *God is the Creator of all things.* With this thought the Bible opens. Who first wrote it, we do not know. It may have been Moses; but whoever it was, God must have revealed it. We cannot grasp the full significance of it, but it is a truth that has changed the character of the world, and made it better. The Hebrews early came to believe that God was behind the world, and have given two parallel accounts of the creation to verify this. The first is in Genesis 1 to 2: 4; the second in Genesis 2: 4 to 3: 24. Both are very remarkable narratives and are unequaled in majesty and beauty of style by anything in ancient literature; but the greatest thing about them is that *they state who made the world.*

> **In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**
>
> **And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.—Genesis 1: 1, 31.**

2. *Man was made in the image of God.* This is the next great truth the Bible teaches. It is expressed in one of the sublimest sentences ever written, for it tells us what we ourselves are like. About that we have often wondered. In every age people have asked questions about it, and received strange answers. The Hebrews thought about it and came to convictions very frankly stated in two separate accounts.

> **God created man in his own image, in the image**

of God created he him; male and female created he them.—Genesis 1: 27.

And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.—Genesis 2: 7.

3. *Sin is disobedience to God's will and the cause of man's misery.* Trouble, sorrow, death are not due to the gods, as the Babylonians thought; they are caused, said the Hebrews, by wrong doing. They brought out this truth by telling the story about the Garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis 2: 8 to 3: 24, and in which are pictured the guilt, shame, and punishment of Adam and Eve. God is described as great and good, righteous and holy, who would not do evil himself, nor desired his children to be guilty of it.

4. *The Flood is associated with man's disobedience.* Contemporaries of the ancient Hebrews had traditions of a great Flood, and they attributed it to various causes. The Babylonians said it was due to jealousy among the gods, who feared that man might become immortal. The Hebrews, on the contrary, said it was due to man's wickedness. A twofold interwoven account appears in Genesis 6–8.

And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.—Genesis 6: 13.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood.—Genesis 6: 14.

And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy son's wives with thee.—Genesis 6: 18.

5. *The confusion of tongues*, the Hebrew writers said, *was caused by human pride and arrogance.* To drive home this truth, they told the story of the Tower of Babel, which is made to lead up by a genealogy to Abraham, in whom humanity was to be shown a better way of life.

The big thing about these narratives is what they have to say about sin and its consequences, God and his character. Through them the Hebrew people tried to teach each other. The stories were told to advance morality and religion, and this was done because they were interested in right conduct and purity of character. From whom could the Hebrews have gotten these high ideals if not from God? For three thousand years they have stood the test of time and are in no danger of being superseded.

Challenged by a Great Ideal

Why do people get restless? Sometimes because they are dissatisfied with the conditions in which they find themselves. It was so in the beginning of our country, and the Revolutionary War followed. It has been so in every great change or reform. It was so many centuries ago when Abraham lived. He is described as a man who is led to see that when God made the world, and the people in it, he had a great purpose in mind. He saw that purpose being defeated by wrongdoing, and it troubled him. This he felt keenly while he kept his flocks near Ur of Chaldea, the life and customs of which were not pleasing to him. While the Chaldeans had a highly developed civilization, he saw that they were "greedy of gain, exacting,

and almost exclusively absorbed by material concerns." Their idolatry, superstition, human sacrifices, and other degenerate practices seemed to Abraham to be a blot on God's world. He hoped for a better order of life so steadfastly that it became a great ideal to live for. While thinking about it, God called him.

The stories that the Bible recounts about him and his family are recorded in Genesis, chapters 12 to 50, and are of value because they show how God uses people who have great thoughts and ideals to make the world better. The narratives fall naturally into the following divisions:

1. Stories about Abraham, the friend of God. Genesis 11 to 25: 10.

2. Narratives about Isaac and Jacob, whom God also used. Genesis 24 to 35.

3. The stories about Joseph and his leadership in time of trial. Genesis 37–50.

The great motive which moves through these narratives, like a theme in music, is the loving purpose of God, made known to Abraham as follows:

> **I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.—Genesis 12: 2.**

This promise, or covenant, has been called the Magna Charta of the Hebrew race. They never forgot it, though they often disregarded it. They passed it from one generation to the next, so that it became the occasion of episodes and experiences of surpassing beauty and interest. Some of the experiences that followed we can readily recall, for they were taught us before we reached our teens.

Among them are Abraham's generosity to Lot, the attempted offering of Isaac, the wooing of Rebekah, Jacob's dream, Joseph's coat of many colors, and his rise in the court of Pharaoh. They are very old stories, and for literary charm and religious value have won universal admiration.

The Training of a Great People

The next great fact brought out is that the Hebrew people are tested for their ideals in a strange land. They are in Egypt and are suffering great hardships. The book of Exodus opens with a few graphic lines that speak volumes.

> **And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor:**
>
> **And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in morter, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.—Exodus 1: 13, 14.**

But this suffering became the occasion for a wonderful deliverance. God remembered his people and raised up a leader in Moses. Therefore in a few swift lines appear the stories about the baby Moses, his training in Pharaoh's Court, his flight to Midian, and his recall to lead the people forth to freedom. The accounts bring out the following details.

1. The ten plagues that harassed the Egyptians for refusing to permit the Hebrews to leave Egypt. Exodus 7–11.

2. The slaying and eating of the Passover lamb. Exodus 12.

3. Crossing the Red Sea. Exodus 13–15.

4. The necessities of life provided in the desert, like the waters made sweet, manna and quails for food.

5. The residence at Horeb-Sinai where suitable laws to govern them are provided. Exodus 20: 2–17.

6. Machinery to administer justice set up. Exodus 18. See also Numbers and Deuteronomy.

7. Worship of the people organized. Leviticus 1–16.

8. Laws concerning holiness, religious vows and tithing provided. Leviticus 27.

9. Law repeated and obedience exhorted. Deuteronomy 1–30.

Such is the combined story of these books. Exodus describes the deliverance of the people and their wanderings in the wilderness. In Leviticus we are shown how God trains his people for communion with him. Every detail of worship, ritual, sacrifice, song and prayer received attention, so that the book has been called very aptly the Handbook of the Priests. Without the book of Numbers we would be deprived of many of the stirring experiences, risks, and dangers that attended the Hebrews in their wanderings toward the land of promise. Through these interesting pages we are shown how, after long years of trial and disappointment, the children of Israel approach the borderland of Canaan. Moses pleads with the people to be faithful and, by rehearsing the favors of God, inspires them to confidence. Then, as he passes into the Great Beyond, Joshua takes his honored chief's place and leads the people forward.

God's Promise Fulfilled

How God keeps his promises and fulfills his covenants the writers and compilers of the Bible constantly endeavor to make plain. A fine example of this is the book of Joshua. It falls into three divisions:

1. The conquest of Canaan. Joshua 1 to 12.
2. The settlement of the tribes. Joshua 13 to 22.
3. Joshua's farewell addresses. Joshua 23, 24.

The book is full of wonderful tales and none are more thrilling than the crossing of the Jordan and the fall of Jericho. Both of them we know since childhood days. There are many more narratives, equally interesting, dealing with the settlement of the tribes and their conquests. Those that we have mentioned are only the first of a long series of events which do not end until the land is subdued and the settlements of the tribes reach to the waters of Meron to the North, as far South as the wilderness, eastward beyond the Jordan, and westward almost to the coast of the Great Sea.

Nothing is finer in the book, nor more inspiring, than the account of Joshua's farewell meeting with the people at Shechem, where Abraham several hundred years before built an altar to Jehovah. At this place of tender associations he addressed the people as follows:

> **Cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.**
>
> **For the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.—Joshua 23: 8, 10.**

Nowhere in the Old Testament is anything more touching than Joshua's leave-taking, when he

charges the people to be faithful. The reply of the people is like a great chorus, we can almost hear now. They said:

> **Nay; but we will serve the Lord.**
> **The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.—Joshua 24: 21, 24.**

The story we have thus covered comprises many centuries. The breadth and sweep of it are almost overwhelming. But we have been held to it because we have seen a great purpose unfolding itself. It is the story of a great adventure that was begun in Abraham and continued in his people, as they endeavored to live according to the will of God. The brilliant and impressive pictures of this section of the Bible have always been popular with the Hebrew people. Even to this day the Jews hold to these books and their stories. This is also largely true of Christian people, who find many things in them to inspire greater loyalty to God and stronger devotion to each other.

Study Topics

1. What to your mind is the most stimulating story in the Genesis? Tell it.
2. Wherein do the Chaldean and Babylonian stories of creation differ from those contained in the Bible?
3. Have some member of the class recite the wooing of Rebekah. Why was Abraham so eager not to make a mistake in seeking a wife for Isaac?
4. What means does God employ in realizing his purposes? Are we very important to him?
5. Give a brief outline of the book of Exodus.
6. Tell the story of Moses and how he was prepared for leadership.

7. What reason can you give for the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness? Could the journey have been made in less time?
8. What books recount the wilderness experiences of the Israelites?
9. Was much attention given to training the people in worship? Which book helps us most in this respect?
10. How may we become the friends of God? Does he need friends? If so, why?

For Further Study

Jackson's *Biblical History of the Hebrews*, pages 1 to 30.
Hunting's *Story of Our Bible*, pages 88ff.
Sanders' *History of the Hebrews*, pages 23ff.
Kent's *The Making of a Nation*, pages 8, 24ff.
Gray's *Critical Study of the Old Testament*, pages 13, 14.
Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, chapter on Genesis.

CHAPTER XIII

BOOKS THAT DEAL WITH HEROES

Perhaps no race has made more of its heroes than the Hebrews. They had many of them. Indeed, they had the kind that inspire nobler living and spur the will to greater achievement. Some of them are favorites with us; we know them so well that they are like old friends.

There are two books in the Bible, and part of a third, that give us quite a galaxy of heroes. They are Judges, Ruth, and a part of First Samuel. These are photograph albums containing portraits of great men and women which Hebrew boys and girls knew in Old Testament times and, we can say with equal truth, Christian young people know to-day. They describe great Hebrew worthies, who lived long since, but whose heroism and faith inspire us yet.

The Dark Age in Jewish History

The world is full of valiant people. There are numerous heroes, but humanity does not always spot them. The reason for this is that heroes usually come to the front or are discovered in time of trial and danger. Sometimes it is a train wreck, a great fire, or a plague, or, again, it may be a public calamity or sweeping disaster, that stages heroism for us. Then great souls are discovered, praised, and immortalized.

The Roster of Fame which the Bible contains was filled in just this way. The great names that appear on it came to public notice in time of stress and trial. Great crises called them forth just as a conflagration these days reveals the heroism of firemen. The book of Judges makes this very plain. It introduces us to a period so dark and tempestuous that it has been called the Dark Age of Jewish history. To see this at the outset will help us to appreciate the heroes that lived at that time.

Each went his own way.—The days were dark because the tribes of Israel did not hang together as during the times of Joshua and Moses. Each tribe went its own way, and so the nation lacked team-work. Jealousy was rampant among the tribes and selfishness characterized their acts. Besides, there was no great commanding personality to weld them together as in the days of Moses, and so they lacked unity. Now, this is important, as every American knows, for in union there is strength.

The situation was so bad that it is described as a time when "each man did that which pleased his own eyes." And again it is said "they did evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them to the power of their enemies." So it was a time of anarchy, unrest, and strife.

A time of compromise.—You will recall what made Abraham an outstanding person. It was his unwillingness to adopt the pagan customs of his neighbors. He would not compromise. The same was true of the other patriarchs. It was also true of Moses and Joshua. These men loved God and, though they often made mistakes, refused to serve anyone else.

This, however, the Israelites sometimes forgot in Canaan, where other religions were in vogue and accompanied by practices of the vilest and most degenerate type. With these the Israelites were constantly warned to have nothing to do. But now that their great leaders were gone, some of them mixed freely with them, intermarried and adopted many of their customs.

> **And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:**
>
> **And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.—Judges 2: 11, 12.**

Attacked by enemies.—Sometimes our enemies know when we are weak. They know when to fawn upon us; they realize when it is safe to strike. This the Israelites learned to their grief. Their enemies were watchful on all sides and molested them whenever it was to their advantage to do so. Consequently, we read that Cushan came from the east, Sisera from the north, the Philistines from the west, and Midian from beyond Jordan. Attacks and invasions like these called forth heroism. They were the occasions when deliverers appeared on the scene and helped God to establish his people.

According to the Bible, thirteen judges rose to champion the cause of Israel and to establish them in political and religious freedom. Of them, however, we will consider only those who are best known.

Judges Raised Up

How God uses people to realize his purposes is one of the most inspiring subjects of study. It strengthens faith and stimulates devotion to know this. God has a way of finding the folk he needs. He it was who in our own history found Wilson, Roosevelt, Lincoln, and Washington. So also in the church he found John Knox, John Calvin, the Wesleys, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Luther, and John Huss. It was he who in the time of the Judges brought deliverance in just the same way and led his people to victory and peace. How in the time of crisis champions rose up to lead Israel we wish now to observe.

Othniel.—One of the first is Othniel, who has a name worth remembering: it means, "the lion of God." Such he proved to be in a time of crisis (see Judges 3: 9–11). It was he who through personal daring and fervent faith, delivered the Israelites from Cushan, king of Mesopotamia, and from the tribute he had exacted for eight years. His victory was so complete that they had rest for forty years.

> **And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer . . . who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.—Judges 3: 9.**

The point to remember is, God raised him up. This the Hebrew writers emphasized. He gave Othniel power to score victory. Of him the Bible says, "The Spirit of God was upon him, and so he judged Israel and went out to war." "He," says

Dr. Robert A. Watson, "is almost unique in this, that he appears without offense, without shame."

Deborah and Barak.—These two names must be associated, for it was Deborah, the prophetess, who, when all others were despondent, aroused Barak to action. By the sheer force of her character and patriotism she inspired him to muster the forces of Israel to meet Jabin, king of Hazor, their formidable enemy from the North. The danger was unusually great, for Jabin had united many of the Canaanites, and in his army were horses and chariots. In Judges 4 and 5 we see the forces approach under Sisera, his commander-in-chief, like a torrent of wrath and ruin.

At this point Deborah came upon the scene, aflame with patriotic zeal, and in her enthusiasm inspired Barak to engage the enemy. The battle took place on the plains of Esdraelon, with every reason to believe that the invader must win; but as the armies faced each other the heavens darkened and a violent rainstorm occurred which flooded the low lands, to the discomfiture and destruction of the mighty host. The victory was an utter rout.

How the Israelites felt about the victory is shown by the fact that God is given all the credit (see Judges 5). Deborah celebrated the event in one of the greatest war poems of history. Its beauty and passion have stirred countless thousands through the centuries, and will continue to do so through all time.

Gideon.—After the defeat of Jabin's host under Sisera, the children of Israel had a short season of rest, during which they made progress building villages, tilling the fields, and herding their flocks.

But there came a time when their harvests invited the envy of desert bands. Among these were the Midianites, who roved wherever it was profitable and plundered with impunity. These depredations, which greatly annoyed the Israelites, continued for about seven years. The Bible informs us that

> **Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.—Judges 6: 6.**

One of the tribesmen who suffered was Gideon. He bore the burden of his people on his heart and no doubt often wondered how Israel's foes could be overcome. Be this as it may, God called him to drive out the invaders and assured him that victory should be his. The story of Gideon's call, the gathering of his army and the reduction of it to three hundred fighting men, and the charge upon the enemy with trumpet, empty pitchers, and torches, reads like a fairy tale. It is interesting to note the battle-cry of the conquerors; it shows on whom they had set their hopes. They moved to the conflict shouting, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

From the Bible text (Judges 6–8) we learn that utter panic was the result. The Midianites feared and cried and fled. In their confusion they attacked each other, so that the slaughter was great and the victory complete.

No story is better known than this. In many a dark day in Hebrew history the elders recited it to the people, and always thought of it as a special deliverance secured by the power of God. The

story, which can be found in Sunday-school texts, is always studied with interest and profit.

Samson.—One of the most picturesque persons raised up in the hour of need was Samson, who lived in southwest Palestine, where he had many encounters with the Philistines, and on whom he wreaked vengeance whenever the occasion offered itself.

He was a man of great strength and, therefore, his exploits aroused popular approval. He was a Nazarite and was consecrated to the Lord before his birth. We are told that he judged Israel twenty years, and during that time accomplished feats of strength and of faith that delighted the Israelites and outraged their enemies (see Judges 13–16).

Samuel.—In Samuel we come to the greatest of them all. He too was the gift of God in answer to a mother's prayer and was consecrated to Jehovah before he saw the light of day. Early in life he was put at the disposal of the Temple and there, under Eli, received the training which prepared him for national leadership. In the Temple he heard the call of God, saw the fall of Eli and his sons, and from it he emerged a strong man to lead the people at a time when the Philistines and others menaced them.

Other great names.—Other persons were also raised up, but them we can only mention. Abimelech, Gideon's son, was one of them, but not called of God; Ehud, who expelled the Moabites, another; so Shamgar, who smote the Philistines; Jephthah, who subdued the Ammonites; and Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, who molested the Philistines. Such were the men used in Israel's Iron Age, when moral

standards were low and religion was only in the making.

Ruth.—This beautiful story is included here because it deals with this period of history. It is a pastoral tale set in a time of sounding trumpets, clanging cymbals, and clash of arms. Its main purpose is to prepare us for another stage in the history of Israel, in the bringing forth of which she has a vital part as an ancestor of David, and so of our Lord. The story testifies to the fact that even in this crude age were quiet, wholesome, God-fearing people, characterized by industry, neighborliness and religious devotion.

Résumé of the Period

This period has been called Israel's Iron Age. Many things about it are hard and rough. The people were adventurers and pioneers, and had the vices and virtues that go with such a mode of life. It is this that makes the Judges such a disturbing book. It is hard for us to reconcile ourselves to narratives so full of war, sin, violence, deceit, and wicked passions. We get the impression the Hebrews do not show up as well as they should after the training received from Moses and Joshua. The book opens with this question:

> **Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?—Judges 1:1.**

It closes with the following words of condemnation:

> **In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.—Judges 21:25.**

Between these two verses is the record of years of faithlessness and idolatry alternating with seasons of religious faith and devotion. Many pages are not pleasant reading. It is a book of shadows, over against which there is some brightness in the life and example of the Judges. But the period is important, and the book that describes it is valuable, because we see by contrast how humanity has advanced in its thought of God, ideas of religion, and standards of morality. We value the book of Judges because its conquests and strife show the crude beginning of a religious life that in the course of time became mightier than empires and, in Christ Jesus who came a thousand years later, stronger than death itself.

Study Topics

1. Describe the attack under Jabin and his commander-in-chief, Sisera. Who was it aroused the Israelites to the attack? (See Judges 4 and 5.)
2. Were all the tribes of Israel united for this attack? (See Judges 5: 14, 15.)
3. How many Judges were there? Which appeal most to you?
4. What do you think of the vow Jephthah made? (Judges 11: 30, 31.) Should he have kept it?
5. What events caused Gideon to come out of his obscurity to lead Israel to victory? (Judges 6–8.)
6. Make a list of Samson's feats (Judges 13–16). What was the cause of his downfall?
7. Tell the story of Samuel and his mother. In what way does a good home help God to realize his purposes for the world? Illustrate.
8. Are there any heroes now? If so, where? Are there any in your town?

For Further Study

Gray's *Critical Study of the Old Testament.*
Grubb's *The Bible,* pages 82–86.
Moulton's *The Bible As Literature,* pages 48ff.
Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 81–85.
Driver's *Introduction to Old Testament,* chapter on Judges.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The Old Testament is the history of a great people. It contains the childhood, youth, maturity, and decline of the Hebrews. It shows how they grew, lived, acted, and came to power. As we have seen before, there are at least twelve historical books in the Old Testament, and they cover a period comprising many centuries. Of them we have already considered Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and parts of First Samuel. The remaining books recount a story that required more than six hundred and fifty years to be enacted.

No other ancient people can match these volumes and the civilization they unfold. They are valuable because of the contribution they make to the religious history of man. Their great theme is God sharing his life with the Hebrews, until, through long years of travail and disappointment, blessing and achievement, they become his instruments in revealing his will and purpose to man. The story can be indicated only in briefest outline.

The Story of the Books

It is always an advantage to know where in a book one can find what he is looking for. To know it that way makes it a friend in need. Especially

is this so of the Bible, which becomes a very interesting and comforting volume, when we know how to handle its pages with skill and intelligence. What story, then, do these historical books relate? This we will endeavor to indicate.

The century of conquest.—This period, which was discussed in a previous chapter, comprises the years between 1170 and 1050 B. C., and has been called the "Teen Age" of the Hebrews. It embraces the time when they settled and conquered Canaan. Much of the period was characterized by migrations, military conflicts, spiritual backsliding, but final success came under the leadership of Samuel. It was he who, more than any other person, prepared them for a more stable form of life and government.

The books devoted to this period are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and portions of Samuel.

The monarchy.—Victory, as well as defeat, works changes. It was so with the Jews, who no sooner grew to influence and power than they wished to be like other nations. Consequently, they demanded a king. Their request came in the following manner:

> **Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.—1 Samuel 8: 4, 5.**

At first Samuel advised against this, but ultimately yielded to pressure and acceded to their request. Saul was made king, and Israel entered upon another period of national life. This, which was marked by varied fortunes, continued from 1050 to 933 B. C.

The history of this period is associated with a few great names. By keeping them in mind, the events, the experiences, and achievements of the people can be readily recalled. These persons are Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. The books to which we are indebted for information are First and Second Samuel, the books of the Kings, and parts of the Chronicles. There are many parallel accounts, so that we have the benefit of several narratives.

1. *Samuel.* The life of this great religious leader and statesman is known to most young people. How he was dedicated to the Lord by his mother, succeeded the house of Eli, and became the champion of Israel in time of stress, is recorded in 1 Samuel 1–7 inclusive. Many years of Hebrew history center in him, and not without reason. About him this tribute is recorded:

> **And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.**
>
> **And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.—1 Samuel 3: 19, 20.**

He was a man of God, and trusted him for strength. He believed in the spiritual destiny of his people and ever kept before them God's promises to Abraham and the other ancient worthies. Because of his great devotion he became the outstanding person of his time. Through his influence many people were induced to turn from the idolatry of their neighbors and worship God. As a judge at Ramah, where he resided, and at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, which he had to visit, he sowed the seeds of godliness. His piety was a constant chal-

lenge for good, and of him it must be said, as it was of another, "He was a bright and shining light."

2. *Saul.* The account of Saul's reign is given in 1 Samuel 8–15 and in 1 Chronicles 9 and 10. In these chapters are narrated the various stories that center in his selection to the kingship. He is shown coming upon the scene tall and manly in appearance, but modest in spirit. There are recounted also his military campaigns, his improvement of the life of the people, his jealousy and persecution of David, and the long chain of events which led up to the disastrous battle at Gilboa, in which he and Jonathan lost their lives (2 Samuel 1:6). Saul will always be remembered as a man who had a great chance, but who, through selfishness, jealousy, and unfaithfulness to God, failed. He was Israel's first king and reigned forty years.

3. *David.* This is not merely one of the great names in Hebrew history, it is the greatest. David reigned forty years and achieved renown as king and man of God. Hebron was his capital for more than seven years. Subsequently, however, he captured Jerusalem, which he fortified and beautified to be his residence and permanent seat of government. He had a vital interest in religion, restored the ark, enriched the music of the people, and organized their worship. In his wars he was successful in subduing the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Amalekites, and the Syrians. He established friendly relations with surrounding people, especially with Hiram, king of Tyre. To this day the Jews honor his memory and sound his praises. The stories of his youth as a shep-

herd lad and harpist, his glorious defeat of Goliath, his generosity to Saul, who hounded him for years, his friendship for Jonathan, his achievements as a soldier, and fame as a king are known to all young people. It was he who made Israel great among the nations and his capital city, Jerusalem, well known in foreign courts. The history of his reign is included in 1 Samuel 16 to 31, 2 Samuel 1–8, and 1 Chronicles 10 to 29.

4. *Solomon.* His reign, which continued for nearly forty years, also is memorable. It was he who built the Temple and organized its services. He developed internal affairs and made his people famous as merchants and traders. He centralized the government and extended foreign affairs. By intermarriage he established friendly relations with foreign people, including Phœnicia and Egypt. He ruled in great splendor and, as we will see later, incurred displeasure through luxury and compromise.

> **So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.**
>
> **And the King made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.—1 Kings 10: 23, 27.**

Doctor Blaikie says of him, "In magnificence, wealth and wisdom, no king was ever known in the East equal to Solomon." Our sources on his reign are the following: 1 Kings 1–11, 1 Chronicles 29, and 2 Chronicles 1–9.

Solomon was a great man, but we must not shut our eyes to many things he did and permitted. The ideals of the time are far beneath the teachings

of Jesus. What some of the consequences of his reign were we shall see next.

The divided kingdom.—Solomon had a passion for imperialism, which is a common danger of all men who come to power. His ideas and plans greatly taxed the people, who took occasion after his death to protest. Therefore when Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him, the people requested a reduction of their burdens. They were led by Jeroboam and, though their cause was just, were denied.

> **And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;**
>
> **And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.—1 Kings 12: 13, 14.**

A rebellion followed with the result that the glorious monarchy came to an end. Ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam and established the Northern Kingdom, or kingdom of Israel, with its first capital at Shechem, and its second at Samaria. But two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to Rehoboam and formed the Southern Kingdom, or Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem.

The history of the divided people is recorded in the books of the Kings and in the Chronicles. The story continues as follows:

1. *The Northern Kingdom.* The Northern Kingdom had a checkered career but continued for a much longer time than it deserved, namely, from 937 to 722 B. C. It had nineteen kings and not

one of them was good. Jeroboam gave it a bad start in establishing calf worship, with altars conveniently stationed at strategic points, notably at Bethel and at Dan. Among its greatest rulers are Omri, who built Samaria and made it famous for beauty; Ahab, who married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, and with her popularized idolatry; Jehu, who brought judgment on Ahab and massacred the worshipers of Baal and resisted the Assyrian attacks from the north; Hoshea, who was king when Samaria fell before Shalmaneser and Sargon, 722 B. C.

In these tumultuous times, when the purposes of God fared so badly, the great hearts that challenge us are the prophets. But for them there is no telling what immeasurable ruin and sin would have followed. However, these good men were ever on the scene and dared to show the people a better way. Among them must be mentioned Elijah, who steadily defied Ahab and won a decisive triumph over Baal at Mount Carmel. He was succeeded by Elisha, who was a prophet of gentleness and a comfort to many thousands. Jonah, who preached to Nineveh, belongs to this period; so also does Amos, who denounced the luxury and wickedness in the reign of Jeroboam II.

Through these great hearts God's great purposes were kept before the people, and their covenant relations not entirely forgotten. These events are recorded in 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17.

2. *The Southern Kingdom.* The Southern Kingdom was more fortunate in its kings, of whom it had twenty, some of whom were of eminent character. This kingdom lasted one hundred and thirty

years longer than the Northern Kingdom, and came to an end with the fall of Jerusalem, 587. The entire period falls between 933 and 587 B. C., and the story is told in 2 Kings 18–25 and 2 Chronicles 10–36.

Owing to greater and better leadership, Judah was more faithful to Jehovah than Israel, though not wholly free from idolatry. Asa, who reigned from 917 to 876 B. C., openly opposed idolatry. Jehoshaphat (876–851) was zealous for God and a ruler of independence. Joash (836–796) found the Temple needed repairs and improved it. Hezekiah (715–686), a man of piety, was impressed by the fall of Samaria, and led his people in reforms, and for a time successfully saved the people from the encroachments of Assyria. Under Josiah (630–608) the Temple was restored and the Book of the Law restored. Great reforms followed and a Great Passover was observed.

Judah also was fortunate in her prophets, among whom were Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. But ultimately the Southern Kingdom had to face a fateful day when, in 605 B. C., the army of Nebuchadrezzar invaded the land and made many captive. Later, in 598 B. C., others were led away, and among them was the prophet Ezekiel. In 587 B. C. Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians, the Temple destroyed, and the leading people of the population taken into captivity. (Read 2 Kings 25.)

The exile and restoration.—So the national existence of the Jews came to an end. After many centuries her cities and temples fell to ruin and all that was left was a religious community. Bitter as these years were in captivity, they were important

years, for in them the Jews deepened their religious life and prepared the way for the Messiah and his kingdom.

The story is taken up in Ezra and Nehemiah, who show us how a remnant return to Jerusalem, where the Temple is rebuilt and the worship of Jehovah restored. This was made possible through Cyrus, king of Persia, before whose hosts Babylon fell, and who showed favor on God's oppressed people. This period extends from 586–433 B. C.

Losses and Gains

It is a wonderful story we have outlined, and had we time to strike a balance on what transpired, we would be surprised. You will recall we began with a nomadic people, who dwelt in tents and traveled hither and yon. We saw them develop a national consciousness and form a monarchy that won the respect of neighboring nations. Divisions and rebellions occurred and the splendid structures of David and Solomon suffered seriously. For long years two kingdoms lived side by side, but finally fell before more powerful civilizations.

But the gains are innumerable. Chief among them is this, that in spite of their moral lapses, they held to Jehovah when all the world besides was weltering in paganism and idolatry. "So this people," says Doctor Snowden, "have enriched the world's history and literature with treasures more precious than all the glory of Greece or grandeur of Rome, for out of their community grew the white flower of the perfect life, Jesus the Saviour of mankind."

Study Topics

1. To what books are we indebted for historical material of Jewish civilization? Name them. How long a period do they comprise?
2. Give outline of history in this period.
3. What great names are associated with the Hebrew monarchy? Which of them is the greatest?
4. What were the causes of Saul's failure? (See 1 Samuel 15, 16, 18, 20, 28.)
5. What was the secret of David's success?
6. What was Solomon's greatest achievement? (Examine 1 Kings 5–9.)
7. What conditions divided the people? How long were they divided?
8. What, if any, were the benefits of the exile? Did the people ever return to Jerusalem? If so, through whose favor?

For Further Study

Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 71–100.
Miller's *Our Reasonable Faith*, pages 27–29.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 14, 15.
Grubb's *The Bible*, etc., pages 82–96.

CHAPTER XV

THE PROPHETS

The friendliest persons in the Old Testament are the prophets. They are nearest to the people and closest to God. They are like some friends we have, who know just what to do in time of trouble or calamity to keep the heart warm and one's faith strong. Perhaps some of us will have to revise our opinions about the prophets, whom we may have believed very unapproachable, severe, and intolerant. Fearless and courageous, abstemious and self-sacrificing, all of them were; but they were also very tender, long-suffering and kind. They loved God and deeply wished all the people to be like them in this respect. That being so, in the prophetic books we come nearest to the heart of God and closest to what he would have his children be and do.

The Prophets Classified

In a former chapter it was indicated that there were five Major Prophets and twelve Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. (Recall them.) Most of us will always think of them according to this classification; but in this study we will associate them with the historical periods in which they lived. So considered, the division is as follows:

The Assyrian period.—This was a long period,

and Assyria was the dominant factor in the background of the Jewish people. By this foreign power, often arrogant and always ambitious, many of their problems were occasioned. Because of it they were never entirely free from anxiety and unrest. Sometimes, in order to keep the peace, Jewish kings had to form alliances that were costly and were forced to yield to compromises that were dangerous. The prophets alone were free men, and, because they feared God, could direct the people and give them comfort.

The prophets of this period, which continued from 1250 to 625 B. C., were Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and probably Joel. During this period the Northern Kingdom collapsed in 722 B. C.

The Babylonian period.—You will recall from your study of general history that Assyria, while it was a vast empire, was loosely bound together. It lacked inherent strength and centralized power. Thus when the Median conqueror, Cyaxares, moved beyond the Zagros Mountains and was assisted by Nabopolassar, Nineveh was captured and the kingdom of Babylonia established. These events affected the Hebrew people, and no one knew this better than the prophets.

To this period belong the following: Jeremiah, Obadiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. During this period the Southern Kingdom fell in 587 B. C., when Jerusalem was taken and its inhabitants carried to Babylon.

The Persian period.—The later Babylonian Empire was short-lived. After continuing for less than ninety years, it was overthrown by the new con-

quering power of Persia, 538 B. C. When Cyrus came to power the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, Egypt, and scattered portions of Palestine. Their hearts were heavy and they needed comfort. This God gave them in the following prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Watchwords of the Prophets

It is surprising how often history turns on so small a matter as a watchword. We all know how the thirteen original colonies were fused together by the slogan, "Taxation without representation is tyranny." In the recent World War a great French general challenged his army with a slogan that worked miracles. It was, "They shall not pass." Now the prophets were God's spokesmen and knew what to say in time of crisis and danger. They were God's champions and the friend of his people. They were his seers, forthtellers, reformers, and heralds. Their words were just what the Jews needed to fortify their souls and to set them right.

The messages and watchwords of the prophets were conditioned by the times in which they lived and by the experiences they had in their relation with God. How well they spoke we will endeavor to see.

Amos.—(About 745 B. C.) Amos was a native of Judah but prophesied in Israel. What he said to Israel could not have been more timely. He must have been inspired of God, else he could not have spoken as he did. The times were hard on the people and their highest interests were at stake. Simplicity of life was gone and social excesses mul-

tiplied. All this was at the expense of the poor, as such conditions always will be. The long reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah had brought about these conditions, and something needed to be done. Furthermore, Assyria was pushing southward and the Northern Kingdom was threatened. At this juncture came from the arid wilderness of Tekoa the prophet Amos. He proceeded to Bethel, the commercial center of Israel, and witnessed the hypocrisy of the priests, the inhumanity of the king, and the wickedness of the people. He unburdened his soul, and barely escaped with his life. His watchword, which follows, was not spoken in vain:

> **Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you.**
>
> **Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.—Amos 5: 14, 15.**

Summarizing his prophecy, as contained in our book of Amos, into a single sentence, it is as follows: God is righteous and his people must be like him.

Hosea.—(Probably 750 to 722 B. C.) Hosea came upon the stage when anarchy and dynastic changes were taking place. Israel was tottering and her condition was hopeless. Hosea saw Israel's condition in the light of his own personal affliction in the infidelity of his wife, whom he forgave and continued to love. His prophecy is like what he felt. He believed God felt that way about Israel and so his watchword reflects his tenderness and

compassion. His slogan is, "Love, eternal love conquers." Nothing is more tender than the concluding chapter, in which he says of God:

> **I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.**
>
> **His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.—Hosea 14: 5, 6.**

Hosea lived in distressing times, but he delivered a message, the warmth and passion of which thrills us yet. (Read his prophecy at a sitting.)

Isaiah.—(In eighth century B. C.) He was a prophet in Judah and at a time when ominous clouds were appearing on the horizon. Isaiah had set his heart upon Uzziah, and his sudden death had much to do with his call to a prophet's work. He was a man of rare attainments and was in a position where he could see first hand the sin and injustice that were rampant. Ahaz, the Grasper, had left the hearts of the people sore and sad. He probably knew the results of Manasseh's evil reign, and therefore, speaks with no uncertain voice.

His prophecy is a severe indictment of social conditions, and his slogan is, "In God is deliverance: He is a refuge to them that trust him."

> **Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;**
>
> **Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.**
>
> **Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—Isaiah 1: 16-18.**

His theme was righteousness and from it he never departed. His prophecies are more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other.

Micah.—(715–686 B. C.) Micah was the prophet of the poor. Probably this is explained by the fact that he came from the peasant population of the Judæan Hills. His speech has the tang of the farm. His message is pure gold.

> **And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**
>
> **But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.—Micah 4: 3, 4.**

He gives us the finest definition of religion to be found in the Old Testament. It is as follows:

> **What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah 6: 8.**

There are many fine passages like this in his prophecy, the general slogan of which is "Judgment trails wickedness."

The prophets of the Babylonian period.—These men lived in times of great trial, for they saw Israel stripped of her heritage and robbed of her possessions. Isaiah also belongs to this period, together with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

Not in all literature can anything be read at once so soulful and tragic as the prophecy of Jere-

miah as he seeks to comfort the refugees down in Egypt and elsewhere. What was needed were voices that could recall the wonderful history and traditions of Israel since the days of Abraham. God's promises and covenants alone could hearten the people. Then it was these great men declared themselves. Jeremiah it was who spiritualized their thought of God and widened their religious vision. Let a single line express each of them. Jeremiah's slogan is, "Jehovah is watchful and cares for his own." Ezekiel's watchword is no less inspiring: "God is sovereign and his goodness can be relied on." Habakkuk is full of encouragement and in substance he says, "The righteous can afford to wait, for God keeps his word." Last but not least, Daniel, perhaps best known, challenges deeper faith when he speaks of "God as the refuge of his saints."

Prophets of Persian period.—There were three prophets in this period, namely, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The first rebuked the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem and became concerned about their own fortunes and proved faithless to the higher interests at stake. He urged faithfulness to the Temple and its rebuilding, the maintenance of worship, and the support of the poor. Haggai's prophecy is short but full of fiery earnestness and lofty purpose. His watchword is, "Honor the Lord with a temple worthy of his great name."

Zechariah's theme was the same, but his style of presenting his message more graphic. In it are visions in which one sees horses, myrtle trees, angels, candlesticks, and towering mountains. There are also chariots and fiery clouds, and, above all, great assemblies of men coming to Jerusalem to worship.

The note of optimism prevails and his slogan is: "Jehovah will perform his covenants and keep his promises."

Malachi, the last of the prophets, and who links the Old Testament with the New, speaks against religious indifference and moral evils. He is concerned about purity of worship and noble living. Summed up in a sentence his message is: "Be clean and honor Jehovah with obedience."

Space forbids further discussion. Suffice it only to observe that the prophets were God's men in the time of stress and trial. They make the Old Testament a book of moral passion and spiritual power, and their works are the most eloquent ever written.

Their Value to God's Purpose

The influence of the prophets is incalculable. The good they did cannot be estimated. Just as our own great men have made our history glorious and help us to understand the civilization we have developed, so it is here. The prophets make the Bible a vibrant book, full of faith, loyalty, chivalry, idealism, and righteous passion. When they come on the stage, chapters of heroism follow which reflect not merely nobility of character, but what is ever more important, the greatness and goodness of God.

Their value to the Bible, and so to man, may be summarized as follows:

1. They reveal how vitally God is interested in life and with what great desire he seeks the welfare of humanity.

2. They are God's greatest teachers, and dis-

close what man needs most to know: the truth that makes him free, the duty that requires obedience, the service that perfects character.

3. They reveal God, his nature, purpose, and character, and give us assurance that he is just, true, and righteous altogether.

4. Many of the world's greatest dreams and ideals for man and society are directly traceable to them.

5. They prepared the way for the Messiah, by preaching the mercy of God, his beneficent plans, and by prophesying his coming.

There are many more things to ponder, but these in a general way show their place and importance in the spiritual history of man. Perhaps nothing can be noted more inspiring than this fact, that what God was to these men he wishes to be to all who will fervently love him and faithfully serve him. This very moment he is seeking you and me.

Study Topics

1. What, to your mind, was the main business of the prophets? Look up the word. How did they get their messages for the people? Do you believe in inspiration?
2. In reading the prophets one sometimes gets the impression that they were the rivals of the kings and priests; is this a correct impression?
3. Does God speak through men and women to-day? Are there great prophetic souls who help us to know and understand both the present and the future?
4. If God could inspire men hundreds of years ago, can he do the same now? What conditions would have to be met? Would prayer, meditation, and study help to make it possible?

5. Which one of the prophets means most to you personally? State reasons. Get other reactions from the class.

For Further Study

Miller's *Our Reasonable Faith*, pages 30ff.
Squire's *God Revealing His Truth*, pages 167–230.
Gray's *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament.*
Penniman's *A Book About the English Bible*, pages 280–297.
Sanders' *Old Testament Prophecy.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE HYMN BOOK OF THE BIBLE

The book of Psalms is commonly known as the hymn book of the Bible. It is a collection of prayers, petitions, meditations, chants, and hymns, drawn from many centuries of Hebrew life. The book, as we have it, passed through many different editors, who brought together those sacred poems and songs that best expressed the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of the people. The psalms they collected are poetic masterpieces and, because they so truly express the hopes and aspirations of the soul, have the distinction of being widely used in private devotions and public worship.

Divisions of the Psalter

Did you ever examine a church hymnal? Then you know what care is exercised in classifying hymns. They are not put together in any indifferent sort of fashion, but grouped according to subject and theme. For example, there are hymns of prayer and adoration, others about God the Father, Jesus the Saviour, and still others that deal with the Christian life, social service, thanksgiving, communion, patriotism, and missions. Just as there are these parts to a hymn book, so in a general way this is true of the book of Psalms.

A hurried look at the Psalter, which has one

hundred and fifty lyric songs in it, leads us to think it is just one book. This, however, is not the case. It consists of five different parts, or smaller books, the contents of which were contributed by many different authors. We think of these psalms as coming from David, but he wrote less than half, or to be definite, seventy-three. Asaph is credited with twelve; the sons of Korah, twelve; Solomon, two; Moses, one; leaving fifty anonymous. David's contribution, however, was the largest, and through his influence the Psalter came to be.

The five divisions of the book are as follows:

Book I. Psalms 1–41. A collection for prayer, praise and personal devotion.

Book II. Psalms 42–72. Containing psalms of aspiration and thanksgiving, together with others for festal occasions.

Book III. Psalms 73–89. National and historical psalms.

Book IV. Psalms 90–106. Psalms of worship and praise, designed for use in Temple services.

Book V. Psalms 107–150. A miscellaneous collection of pilgrim songs, songs of ascents, and hymns of joy in God's presence.

When these divisions were made we do not know. However they were already recognized by the Jews from the second century of our era, and are now marked in the Revised Version of the Bible.

Book I. Praise and personal devotion.—Most of the psalms of this book are ascribed to David and are personal in character. The pronouns "I" and "me" are used extensively, as for example, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed; let not

mine enemies triumph over me." The book reflects the loyalty of a great heart, that has communed much with nature and known trouble, but found God faithful in all his experiences.

Among the best-known psalms in this collection may be mentioned the following, the first lines of which are given:

1. *The Morning Psalm* (*5th*).

> **Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.**
>
> **Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto thee will I pray.**
>
> **My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.**

2. *An Evening Song* (*Psalm 4*), which closes with these beautiful lines expressing confidence and peace:

> **I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.**

3. *The Nature Psalm* (*Psalm 19*). This is a fine piece of writing and indicates that whoever wrote it must have lived close to nature and rejoiced in it.

> **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.**
>
> **Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.**

4. *A Psalm of Confidence* (*Psalm 27*).
5. *A Psalm on the Greatness of Man* (*Psalm 8*).
6. *A Psalm of Salvation* (*Psalm 32*).
7. *The Shepherd Psalm* (*Psalm 23*). Of this rare gem of poetic writing Dr. Alexander MacLaren

writes, "The world could spare many a large book better than this sunny little psalm. It has dried many tears and supplied the mold into which many hearts have poured their peaceful faith."

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Being so richly personal in character, this first book of the Psalter has a large place in the private devotions of young and old. The collection will stand closer study and inspection.

Book II. Aspiration and thanksgiving.—This is largely a book of praise. It begins with the well-known line "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." It has a fitting close in "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things."

In this collection are quite a number of special psalms which were used on festal occasions. Among them are Psalms of Harvest (65th), "Holy Convocation" (47–67), and Thanksgiving (46–48, 66, 68). None is more inspiring than the 46th, which is known as the "Refuge Psalm":

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

This psalm was the basis of Luther's great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," so that the two are always associated in the minds of Christians. Other psalms of this book which are well known are the 47th, expressive of joy; the 51st, a prayer for mercy; and the 67th, which begins with a petition ministers sometimes use in opening public worship: "God be merciful and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us." The "Marriage Psalm" is in this book and is full of gracious words, felicitous gestures, and fervent devotion: it is the 45th.

Of this group Psalms 51–72 are ascribed to David. The others are supposed to have been contributed by the sons of Korah and by Asaph.

Book III. National and historical.—(This comprises Psalms 73–89.) Some scholars think this section was compiled by Nehemiah for use in the second Temple; but of this we cannot be sure. The collection is characterized by songs of longing and deep feeling, as coming from folk in exile who are seeking to express their grief and disappointment. Here, then, we have psalms dealing with the desolation of the sanctuary (74th), the desecration of Jerusalem (79th and 84th), and with the people's longing to return to the Temple. There are no more wonderful words expressed anywhere about public calamity and personal loss than are to be found in the 79th psalm.

O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

These psalms in the main are in the minor mode, and, therefore, sublime and profound, rather than bright and exultant.

Book IV. Psalms of worship and praise.—(Psalms 90–106.) This book is liturgical in character and has to do with Temple services. The psalms are stately, joyful, and prevailingly confident. Many of them are "old favorites" with us and can be recited without effort. Of them, one of the most beautiful is the Psalm of Hope (90th) and the most exultant the 95th, which opens with a confident ring.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Others that are used frequently in church services and prayer meetings are the 96th–98th. The best known in this group is probably the 103d, in which the psalmist summons himself to praise God, and does so thinking of his bounty and care.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Still another that every one should know is the 104th, commonly known as the Psalm of Creation.

Book V.—(Psalms 107–150.) This is miscellane-

ous in character and includes among others Pilgrim Songs, that were used by the faithful on their way to festal occasions at Jerusalem. Their beauty and power can be appreciated only by imagining to ourselves vast throngs of people singing them while journeying to the city they loved best. It is the longest of the collection and was probably written for the worship of the second Temple, and with special interest in the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and the Tabernacle.

The most popular of this collection, we can recall as readily as many of our gospel songs; and they mean infinitely more. Among them must be included the following:

Psalm 121: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.

Psalm 122: I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

Psalm 130: Out of the depth have I cried unto thee, O Lord.

Psalm 139: O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

There are many more like this which were used in public worship, where they were sung antiphonally and in choral movements. The 136th psalm was sung in this way and by thousands of voices, and whenever this was done, the people were strengthened and their hopes revived.

The Purpose of the Psalms

If we should ask ourselves what was the purpose of this ancient hymn book, we would not long be at a loss for an answer. It aimed to do exactly what our modern songbooks have in mind. The

reasons for hymns and hymn books are very definite, and we would not do without them for a single day. Their purpose is rich and manifold.

To stimulate worship.—How easy it is to come into the presence of God when our souls are in tune with a great hymn! Then they go upward like birds on the wing. Music helps us to find God. Now, this the Psalms aimed to do and succeeded in doing. Some of them are so full of devotion, confidence, and faith that they cannot be repeated without deepening one's consciousness of God.

To deepen emotions.—There is nothing the world needs more than fine and exalted feeling. It is easy to work and "carry on" when inspired. If you have ever been in a parade, you know how this is: it is easy to continue in the march if the marchers sing or the band plays. So it is with the great psalms: when they sing themselves into the soul they make us more than conquerors by their mighty movements and majestic ideas.

Enrich the imagination.—The Psalms supply us with the finest mental pictures ever written and conceived. Think of the fine imagery of the twenty-third psalm; nothing can be more beautiful. It is a fine picture to hang on the wall of the memory. There are many such in the Psalter, and their chief glory is this, that when they get inside of us they stimulate and enrich the imagination.

They supply comfort.—The hearts of the world are always sorely in need of solace and cheer. This is so true that Dr. John Watson, the author of *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, said, "If I had my ministry to live over, I would be more loving and

tender-hearted." The world needs comfort, and this the psalms, the great psalms, aim to give. Recall your "favorites" and see how wholesome and helpful they are! Because this is so, this ancient hymn book has made the centuries past brighter for its music and more hopeful because of the great faith it expresses. Its great hymns have been sung in tents and in wayside glens, in desert places and along terraced hillsides, in the solitude of forgotten caves and in the imposing audience chamber of the temple.

So turn to this old book with new devotion and use it more than ever. Its consolation will be more widely felt than ever before; and the day will never come when its beauty, harmony, fire, and passion will be unsung.

Study Topics

1. What contribution did David make to the development of religious poetry? Do you consider him a great poet? Give reasons.
2. What, to your mind, makes a hymn book essential to public worship? Ask your teacher whether pagan people have produced great music.
3. Name your favorite psalms and indicate why they mean much to you. Which is the "Refuge" psalm?
4. Examine the Hymn Book in your church and see how its hymns are classified. Is there something like this in the book of Psalms?
5. In what respect does a hymn differ from other poetry? Is it because it is addressed to Deity?
6. It is said that the late Doctor John H. Jowett, the great preacher, read the Psalter once every month: why did he do this?

7. Read the following "Pilgrim" psalms: 121, 124, 126. Why are they so called?

For Further Study

Hunting's *Hebrew Life and Times*, pages 140ff.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 24, 25.
Knott's *Students' History of the Hebrews*, pages 39ff.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 78–90.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article on Psalms.
Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, chapter on Psalms.
Briggs' *Biblical Study*, pages 248ff.
Ninde's *Story of the American Hymn*.

CHAPTER XVII

OTHER POETICAL BOOKS

In the previous chapter we saw that the Jews were a musical people and had a hymn book that even yet is unexcelled. But the Psalter does not include all the poetry which has come to us from the Hebrew people. There are other poetical books in the Old Testament to be considered, and among them are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Job. Of this collection the best known are Proverbs and Job. All of them, however, are valuable because of the homely wisdom and practical common sense they contain.

The Book of Proverbs

This book has always had a large circle of readers. It is quoted with accuracy and freedom. Its pithy sayings and wise couplets are well known, and almost daily one can see them used in editorials, sermons, and speeches. As homely counsel, Proverbs is in a class by itself.

Authorship.—The book was formed gradually, and comprises wise sayings culled from many generations. It is probable, however, that a substantial part was contributed by Solomon. Other portions were collected under the direction of Hezekiah (chapters 25–29); still others by Agar and King Lemuel. The whole collection is a storehouse of wisdom and counsel worth examining.

A book of etiquette.—Proverbs is really a work of moral etiquette, in which duty and conduct are the controlling themes. In treating these subjects, the outline of the book is as follows:

1. *Parental Instruction in Wisdom.* (Comprising chapters 1–9.) In this section the young are shown how to live. Wisdom speaks, and indicates the dangers and snares of sin, the benefits and blessings of virtue. Idleness, mischief-making and pride are condemned. Obedience to the law is commended and shown to be the sure way to peace and happiness. How excellent the counsel is! Note the passages taken at random:

> **My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.—Proverbs 1: 10.**

> **Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.—Proverbs 3: 5, 6.**

> **Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.—Proverbs 6: 6-8.**

As a kind of refrain one hears almost constantly, these words:

> **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom.**

2. *Wise Sayings and Admonitions.* These comprise chapters 10–30, and in them are discussed righteousness, wealth, goodness, the use of the tongue, the temptations of pride, the rewards of

humility, and the ruin involved in intemperance. In this section are many passages worth memorizing, for they have never been surpassed.

Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.—Proverbs 10: 12.

A false balance is an abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.—Proverbs 11: 1.

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.—Proverbs 15: 13.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.—Proverbs 16: 18.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Proverbs 20: 1.

3. *Portrait of a Virtuous Woman.* (See Proverbs 31: 10–31.) This portion of the book is a fine piece of writing and should be known by every young woman. The lines are rich in beautiful imagery and finished expression. We are told that a virtuous woman is "above the price of rubies, she can be trusted, she works with her hands, her watchfulness is like a candle that burns all night; she is kind to the needy, honoreth her husband, her tongue is the law of kindness, and her influence is a benediction."

There are many more passages like these in the book, which should have wider reading and acceptance. Especially young people who are interested in collecting fine sayings and quotations will find Proverbs extremely profitable.

Ecclesiastes

This is a book of meditations. The things thought about are life and society. The writer has been in a "brown study" and makes observations that he believes worth while. He is looking backward, and though he has great wisdom, position, and wealth, concludes, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." As he grapples with the problems of evil, he becomes skeptical and propounds questions which are difficult to answer. He hopes for the best, but wonders whether life is worth while.

About some matters he is very definite, as follows:

(*a*) *There is nothing permanent here.* While this is not a new observation with him or others, before it he trembles. It makes him feel that life is just one continuous monotonous round of aimless living, in which man seems to arrive nowhere. His word is quite pessimistic and he wishes things might be otherwise.

> **I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.—Ecclesiastes 1: 14.**

> **All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.—Ecclesiastes 3: 20.**

(*b*) *Happiness cannot be had in earthly enjoyments.* Of these the writer has had his share, but they do not satisfy. Happiness is not to be secured in houses and vineyards, gardens and orchards, nor in silver and gold. Even the delights of music and the affluence of wealth are insufficient. He says:

I withheld not my heart from any joy: . . . I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.—Ecclesiastes 2: 10, 11.

(*c*) *There is hope in God.* The preacher's "brown study," however, brings him to a safe place. He finds that man's only hope is in God and, consequently, he comes to a better conclusion. His pessimism has to make way to hope:

Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.—Ecclesiastes 12: 13.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—Ecclesiastes 12: 14.

As for the authorship of the book, there is a diversity of opinion. It was probably written in the period of the Persian Rule, that is, before 333 B. C., though others feel it was as late as 200 B. C., during the Greek Period. Scholars seem to feel that the author was not Solomon, on the ground that the work is neither like him nor like the times in which he lived.

The Book of Job

This book is one of the great masterpieces of religious literature. Tennyson considered it the greatest poem of history and never swerved from his opinion. It deserves more time than we can give it here: all we can do is to introduce it and urge further study. It discusses one of the great

problems of life, one that has disturbed us all, namely, why do the righteous suffer?

The contents.—In dealing with this problem the work is cast in the form of prose, poetry and dialogue. This combination of circumstances and treatment gives the book dramatic power, so that it is quite easy to read. The contents may be divided into five parts:

1. *The Prologue.* (Chapters 1–2.) This is written in prose and, after stating the problem, connects it with Job, who is introduced as a man of piety and uprightness of conduct. Of him it is said, "He feared God and turned away from evil."

He was happy and prosperous—

> **There were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.—Job 1: 2, 3.**

2. *Job Suffering.* The scene shifts and the great man is staged tried beyond measure by calamity and adversity. His flocks, his servants, and his children are destroyed, but "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." After this he is smitten with boils and leprosy, and his trouble is great. Then three of the hero's friends appear to comfort him, and they use many of the trite and insufficient arguments that folk are accustomed to use even yet. Several times they speak. They attribute his suffering to wrongdoing, but he protests that this is not so and with tragic earnest-

ness affirms his faith in God. (This comprises chapters 3–31.)

3. *Intervention of Elihu.* (Chapters 32–37.) Elihu comes on the scene with a keen appreciation of his own self-sufficiency and superior wisdom. His speech is therefore prolific and violent, and consequently gives Job little comfort. He, too, maintains that Job has been guilty of evil and that his suffering is the judgment of God.

4. *Job Is Vindicated.* The concluding chapters of the book deal with the vindication of Job. God comes to his rescue and enables him not merely to withstand his befriending but unsuccessful neighbors, but to stand forth confident, comforted and reassured. Job's climax of faith all suffering hearts should know. It is as follows:

> **He knoweth the way I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.—Job 23: 10.**

The thirty-eighth chapter of the book is one of the loftiest flights in all religious literature. It presents a great panorama of God and his creation. This is for Job's benefit, who, in spite of all that he has felt, protests that his Redeemer lives and will sustain him. The book fittingly closes with the statement that, "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning; and he died, being old and full of days."

Song of Songs

The author of this very beautiful pastoral poem is supposed to be Solomon. The story is made to revolve around a Shulamite maiden, who was car-

ried away by Solomon's officers and confined to his harem at Jerusalem. There she is sought and enticed, but without success. The old ties of home hold, and her heart remains true to her peasant lover. She faces the blandishments of the king, maintains her honor, and remains constant. Finally she is rescued and returns to live in quiet and peace.

The poetry of this book is exquisite in style and movement. The imagery is beautiful and picturesque. The message it conveys cannot be mistaken: it condemns degeneracy in court life and is full of stinging scorn for the polygamy that was practiced in high places to the shame and sorrow of the common people.

Value of These Books

In the setting forth of high ethical ideals, wise precepts and homely maxims suitable to every age and stage of life these books are preeminent. Books of quotations, which are always popular with young people, must take second place by the side of these classics. What these contain are like nuggets of gold that can be converted into currency in the common affairs of life. Many of the great sayings are like the inscriptions on signposts: they are welcome and wholesome because they show us the way and help to keep us in it.

Study Topics

1. Who were "the wise" men in Israel? Was Solomon one of them? What great questions did they write about?

2. Have you ever read the book of Proverbs? What subject gets the greatest consideration? What seven sins does it condemn? Read Proverbs 6: 16–19.
3. What is the advantage in having a book of etiquette? Could the book of Proverbs be considered a guide for conduct?
4. Tell the story narrated in the Song of Songs. What is the most wonderful thing about it?
5. Have you ever had trouble? Did friends come to help you at that time? Were they like Job's friends?
6. Which of the poetical books in the Old Testament means most to you, and why?

For Further Study

Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pages 392–478.
Grubb's *The Bible*, pages 117–121.
Knott's *Students' History of the Hebrews*, pages 390ff.
Hunting's *Hebrew Life and Times*, pages 155–160.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 85–95.
Peritz's *Old Testament History*, pages 267–272; 285–290.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
Flewelling's *Christ and the Dramas of Doubt*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GOSPELS

THE Christian Church is organized around a Person. His great and loving spirit gives it life. The things he said and did and taught give it a program. This person is Jesus Christ. That we should never forget him and his ministry the Gospels were written. They give us first-hand information about him and his character, so that to-day he is the best-known and the most widely revered Person of history.

There are four Gospels, and they stand right at the portal of the New Testament in order that the memory of the Lord may be kept fresh and the record of his life better known. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and are called Gospels because they are full of "good news."

A FOURFOLD PORTRAIT

When we look at these books it is as though we were looking at four different pictures of the same person. If you have ever belonged to a group of kodakers, you can see the advantage of this. Different pictures of the same person or scene give variety of data and information. It is so with the Gospels, which, while they have many things in common, help us to see the Lord from different points of view.

The first three Gospels are very much alike and

follow the same general plan. Because of this fact they are known as the synoptic Gospels. They give us a common view of Jesus. From their narratives we can build up an outline of the Lord's life from birth to the ascension. This is possible because they tell the story in the same way and frequently in the same words.

Of these books scholars agree that Mark is the oldest and was used by Matthew and Luke; and, furthermore, they agree that Matthew and Luke had access to still another document now lost. The Gospel of John was written later and with a different purpose, as we shall see. By these four books we are supplied our picture of the Lord, and a wonderful picture it is. Let us now note what it is like.

Matthew.—This is the first in position in the New Testament, and probably it is the most popular. Its popularity is largely due to the fact that it shows beyond a doubt that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Messianic hope. (Recall the chapter on this subject.) Indeed, Matthew made it his purpose to prove this; and he was ambitious in this respect because he wanted to win the Jews into an acceptance of Jesus as their Saviour. He wishes to convince them that their hopes were fulfilled. Consequently, he quotes frequently from Old Testament prophecy and sets forth Jesus as the "One that should come to redeem Israel."

As no other of the Gospels, Matthew narrates the discourses of the Saviour, and in such a way that we feel as though he were talking to us. To it we are indebted for the following:

1. The Sermon on the Mount, which opens with

the Beatitudes, and continues to give us many of the Saviour's most memorable sayings (Matthew 5: 3, 13, 16):

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

2. The Saviour's instruction to the disciples, and how he wished them to serve, are also indicated. (See Matthew 10: 11.)

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

3. The parables of the Kingdom, which attracted so much attention and multiplied his followers, are given in the 13th chapter. Among them are the following: The sower and the seed, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the drawnet.

4. His address to the disciples, in which he warns them to be humble, kind, faithful, and fearless, is also to be noted. (Matthew 18–19.)

5. Prophetic discourses are also peculiarly distinctive in Matthew. In them the manly side of

the Saviour is disclosed, and also his clear discernment of the dangers ahead. (See Matthew 23–25.)

The picture Matthew paints makes a very definite impression. He sees in Jesus the fulfillment of the old hopes that Israel entertained for centuries. His kingdom is at hand, and its benefits are for all people. Because Matthew has made so much of the Lord's teaching, this book is considered "the most important one ever written."

Mark.—Of the four Gospels this is the briefest. Its sentences are short, brisk, and pungent. Mark does not waste words: he is plain, blunt, and straightforward. While, however, he is simple and direct, he does not sacrifice a single detail. Of the four Gospel writers he it is who follows chronologically the Saviour's life from beginning to the end, and tells the story as an eyewitness. His book lacks artistic expression, but in spite of this fact, it is the most manly and virile of all the Gospels.

The directness of Mark's style is shown in verses like the following:

> **And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.**
>
> **And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.—Mark 1: 40, 41.**
>
> **Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.—Mark 2: 11.**
>
> **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—Mark 2: 17.**

The Gospel has been called the Gospel of Action because it recounts the deeds of Jesus. His mighty

works are constantly in the foreground, and Jesus is seen in the light of the ministry he rendered. For this reason it has always been a welcome volume among men, especially soldiers.

Luke.—This Gospel, as the introductory verses indicate, was written to help a friend. Therefore it is characterized by sympathy and sublime patience. In style it excels the first and the second Gospels, and has been called the most beautiful book ever written. This becomes evident when we read stories of the Saviour's childhood. The same is true of the Christmas carols of the angels and the visit of the adoring shepherds. No writing can be more beautiful than these passages:

> **And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.**
>
> **And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.**
>
> **And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.**
>
> **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2: 8-11.**

That Luke was a physician explains why six miracles which he alone records are miracles of healing. Because he knows suffering and where its pain is most felt, he gives women a large place in his Gospel. Everywhere the book shows Jesus as the friend of publicans and sinners, the comfort of the distressed and the strength of the weary.

To Luke we are indebted for the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the rich

fool, the Pharisee and the publican, Dives and Lazarus, and the good shepherd. Knowing these stories as we do, we can understand why Luke's Gospel has been called the universal Gospel. Luke, as no other, shows that the Saviour belongs to every needy soul, irrespective of color, race, or creed.

John.—Doctor Dods, the great theologian, says this is a perfect work of art. It is like a mosaic, in which every stone has its proper place. This book gives us the most intimate picture of the Saviour and introduces us to his great heart. John makes us conscious of the Saviour's feelings and helps us to hear him sigh, see his eyelids drop, and feel the touch of his hand. The story is so full of love that this book has been called the Gospel of heart-beats.

John states very clearly why he wrote the book. (See John 20: 31.) He says "that all men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing in him might have everlasting life." In order to succeed in this purpose he portrays Jesus as the Life, the Light of the world, the Eternal Bread, the Water of Life, and the Eternal Comforter. He alone gives us the "Table Talk" of the Lord, in which are the tenderest and most searching words spoken. If we try to recall them, the following challenge attention:

> **Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**
>
> **In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**
>
> **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:**

not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Because the Gospel of John is like this, it is more frequently quoted by the living and more devotedly remembered by the dying, than any other.

It emphasizes these things, which indeed are found in all the Gospels:

1. Jesus is the Christ, the gift of God's love.
2. To redeem from sin he suffered on the cross.
3. By faith in him we are saved.
4. His presence and watch-care are unfailing.

Our Priceless Inheritance

Without these Gospels we would be very poor indeed. They are the greatest books in the world to-day. Someone has said that all the great libraries of Christendom are built around them. The church uses them in its hymn books, its art, and in its services. People carry the Gospels in their pockets and read them on trains and ferries. They are so vital that Heinrich Heine said of them, as he lay dying: "They are warm as the sun-healing breath of a mother's love."

The purpose of these books is plain. No one can be mistaken. But that we may deepen the impression which they seek to make, let us note the following:

1. They help us to know and understand the Saviour—His love, his service, his sacrifice for sin, his resurrection. When we read them he seems to live again.

2. They help us to remember the standards of

life he set up, and which are so important in the establishment of his kingdom throughout the world.

3. The Saviour's words are kept before the world through these books. This is important, for they are the words of life, which, if given a chance, transform the mind.

4. They help us to be like the Saviour in service. It is said of Jesus, that he went about doing good. That is what we are to do, and in the measure we succeed in this respect we help God to make the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ.

Study Topics

1. Why are the first books of the New Testament called Gospels? Look up the meaning of the word.
2. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) and report on the things that impress you most.
3. If you were trying to convince a Jew that Jesus was the Christ, which of the Gospels would you suggest for his reading? Why?
4. Recall the portrait Mark gives us of Jesus. What impression of the Lord does he give?
5. Which Gospel do you read most? State the reasons.
6. What Gospel gives us the most intimate picture of the Lord? Explain just what you mean.
7. Indicate the distinctive purpose of each of the Gospels, and note the advantage of this.

For Further Study

Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 237–266.
Grant's *Early Days of Christianity*, pages 250–255.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 58–72.
Grubb's *The Bible*, pages 185–195.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 118–123.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS

JUST as eager as the disciples were not to forget the Lord, so is it with us who want to remember the church and its early struggles. We wish to know how it came to be and by what means its influence was extended. What did it teach? What was the secret of its marvelous growth? What kind of people were in it, and why did they join it? These are some of the matters in which we are interested and make us curious to lift the curtain of the past to ascertain what transpired.

Fortunately, there is a book in the New Testament which lifts the veil and permits us to see the drama that was enacted in the early days of the church. It introduces us to the actors on the stage, and does this so well that the play, which has many tragic elements in it, is reenacted for us. This book is known as "The Acts of the Apostles" and was written by Luke, the beloved physician and lifelong friend of Paul. It relates the origin, early life, and history of the church and gives us the secrets of its tremendous power.

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

When the curtain is lifted we find the church just where we would least expect to see it—in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a place of peril; in it the

Saviour was tried, condemned, and crucified. His enemies had done their worst to him and were prepared to give the same measure to his followers. It was not a safe place for the Christians to be in, but there is where we find them bearing witness to their devotion. This they did so well that within a few years their influence had made itself felt in almost every quarter of the civilized world.

Some of the scenes the Acts presents are as follows:

Rejoicing in the Saviour.—After the awful tragedy on Calvary we would expect the little church to be disheartened and despondent. But this is not the case. The Christians are happy and rejoicing in the greatest event that has ever occurred in history, namely, the resurrection of Jesus. He had overcome death and had been seen by some of them. To add to their joy was his ascension into glory, which also some of them had witnessed. They were happy because they had a living Saviour, who was still mindful of them, loved them in the same old way, and would come again to reign forever. This is the first picture the Acts presents. Others are like unto it.

The Descent of the Spirit.—The Acts is full of experiences, but none is greater than that which occurred on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Christians:

> **And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**
>
> **And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.**

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—Acts 2: 1-4.

For such an event the disciples fully prepared themselves by prayer and communion. They met frequently in an upper room in Jerusalem, where they made their circle complete by selecting Matthias to fill the place vacated by Judas' death.

Pentecost was a great day of revival. The church was filled with spiritual enthusiasm and power. Strange energies filled its people and made them glad in the Lord. None was more moved than Peter, who preached a great sermon that resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls in a single day (Acts 2: 14). There were many days just like this, with the result that in a short time the little company of believers had become a multitude. What is more remarkable still is the fact that some of the Christians, so it is reported, had power to heal the sick and to raise the dead. Everywhere the people were amazed at what they saw and wished to know how these things could be. There was only one answer to be made, and that was always given by the disciples—their secret was Jesus:

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done

to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.—Acts 4: 7-10.

So the little church, according to the Acts, was not merely a *rejoicing* but also a *powerful* church; and many signs and wonders were wrought that make us wonder even yet. This is the second picture to which the Acts introduces us.

Believing groups.—With such strange things happening every day, many people became believers. Naturally, they sought each other's companionship, so that after a while small groups of believers could be found in almost every town and village. They were brotherhoods, and in some places had everything in common. The Acts informs us how they lived for each other and for the Lord. "They met daily, breaking bread and giving thanks." To them only one thing mattered, namely, loyalty to Jesus, their risen Lord. This is a third picture that should not escape us.

The poor.—There were many poor in the church, which fact we can readily understand. It is always the unfortunate that most keenly sense their need of comfort and salvation. There were many in the early church, and it is refreshing to see what generous provision was made for their welfare. The Acts informs us that the church selected seven of its choicest men (Acts 6: 24) "who were of good report and full of the spirit." These men rendered invaluable service and served to the extent of mar-

tyrdom. (Read Acts 7.) This fourth picture shows us that right from the beginning the church was distinguished for benevolence.

The Gentile World

At first the outside world was largely forgotten by the Christians, but this could not continue long. Christianity is not a religion that can be kept to itself: it has to be shared. However, it was persecution that proved a benefactor to the outside world. This was caused by the very success of the church in Jerusalem, where it was brought into conflict with some of the Jewish leaders. The healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3: 12–16), the preaching of the apostles, accompanied by signs and wonders (Acts 5), the boldness of Stephen, all led to this. Upon the stoning of Stephen the Christians were scattered abroad throughout Judæa and Samaria, and only the apostles remained in Jerusalem (Acts 8: 1).

> **At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.—Acts 8: 1.**

Preaching elsewhere.—Wherever the Christians went they preached Christ. Consequently, we have a record of Philip preaching in Samaria and ministering later to the Ethiopian. We are told also how Peter was shown his duty and directed to the home of Cornelius. (See Acts 10–11.) A great missionary spirit possessed the church and triumphs

were scored that stir us yet. One of the greatest is next to be noted.

Saul's conversion.—At first Saul was only an honest objector, but later he became a bitter opponent. His bringing up had much to do with his attitude, for he was trained for leadership, and one of his teachers was no less a person than Gamaliel, who was the most famous rabbi of his time. Under his instruction Saul became a strict Pharisee and a bitter and intolerant enemy of the Christians. But the unexpected happened: he himself became a follower of Jesus, and, as we shall see, the first great missionary of the church. (Read Acts 9.)

Antioch.—At first the church, as we have seen, confined itself to Jerusalem, but in a short time other centers came under its influence. A notable example is Antioch, then the third largest city of the Roman Empire. Many Christian refugees had found their way to it, and, settling in it, remained true to their religion. They were full of evangelistic passion and made many converts. Their faithfulness is evidenced by the fact that in this city the followers were first called Christians. (See Acts 11: 19–26.)

Thus early in its career the church was devoted to evangelism. It had a great secret and could not keep it to itself. Before its members knew what had really happened there were groups of Christians in Judæa, Samaria, on the coast plains, and elsewhere. The leading persons of this period were, of course, the apostles, and the church revolves around them. But in the latter portion of the Acts, the story centers in Paul, whose work is next in order.

The Church and the World

Christianity is a missionary church. To use a military term, it cannot rest on its arms. It is full of adventure and is not content until its benefits and blessings are the common possession of all men. The Acts gives us glowing pages of what occurred in this respect and how in a brief period of time many great centers were evangelized. The controlling genius in this larger work of extension was Paul.

Missionary journeys.—From the time of his conversion to the end of his life Paul was a traveler. To use a commercial term, he was trying to sell Christianity to the world, and he was so devoted to his calling that he made three great trips for this very purpose. What he did as a missionary the latter portion of the Acts relates. Only by using a map and noting his itineraries can we appreciate the magnitude of his work.

1. *The First Missionary Journey.* This is recorded in Acts 13 and 14 and describes an extended tour. The journey included a sail to Cyprus and then to Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. After a considerable time of varied success he returned to Antioch. In this journey he was assisted by Barnabas and John Mark.

2. *The Second Missionary Journey.* In this Paul and Silas were together. They visited the churches that were organized in his first tour, and being joined by Timothy and Luke, proceeded from Troas into Europe. On this tour they visited Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth. Returning, they stopped at Ephesus. About three years was devoted to the work, when they returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 15: 36 to 18: 22.)

3. *The Third Missionary Journey.* In this, as in the former tour, many churches were visited and encouraged in Asia. Most of the time, however, was given to Ephesus, where Paul ministered about three years.

These tours are refreshing reading and should be studied at a single sitting, otherwise we cannot appreciate their romance and heroism.

Council at Jerusalem.—The early church had many great problems to solve. One of them was occasioned by the Jewish Christians, who believed that believers should continue to practice the rites and customs of the Temple. To settle this matter a council was called at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1–31) and, among others, Paul was present. This was after his first missionary journey, so that he had valuable information to give. The result of this conference was that Gentile believers were given equal rights with the Jews without submitting to the ancient ceremonial law.

Paul a prisoner.—Paul did not have an easy time in his ministry, as we shall see. After his third missionary tour he returned to Jerusalem, which he visited in order to distribute alms to the poor Christians. Seen in the Temple one day, where he was bearing testimony to his work, he was attacked by the Jews, later arrested and sent to Cæsarea, where he remained a prisoner for two years. Not satisfied with the course of his suit, he appealed to Cæsar and was sent to Rome. Arriving there he was graciously received by the brethren, and was "suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him" (Acts 28: 16), and he abode "two whole years in his own hired house,

and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28: 30, 31).

The Impression Made by Acts

Such is the character of this great book that we wish there were more of it; but it ends abruptly and leaves us to imagine the rest. Several impressions, however, we cannot mistake as we ponder the period, which comprises about thirty years (about 29 to 59 A. D.), and is the inspiration of our own.

1. *A believing church* is a powerful church. This was the great secret of the primitive Christians: they loved the Saviour and their faith in him made them strong.

2. The church, when faithful to Jesus and his teaching, *can make the world over.* This fact the Acts makes very plain.

3. Christianity is not a "kill-joy" religion. It is bright, wholesome, and cheery. If it is genuine, it radiates light.

4. The church is precious to the Lord. He protected it in those early days, and he will shelter it now. Therefore, we may confidently sing:

"I love thy church, O God;
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand."

Study Topics

1. Describe the effect upon the disciples of the following events: (*a*) The Crucifixion; (*b*) The Resurrection; (*c*) The Ascension.
2. What is it that gives a church power? How do you account for the wonderful power of the primitive church?
3. Did the early Christians continue to share the worship of the Temple and observe the rites and ceremonies of their Jewish neighbors?
4. As you recall the events that you have read in the Acts, why were the Christians persecuted? Is persecution ever a benefit?
5. Where were the headquarters of the early church? Would it not have been better to have had a less conspicuous place?
6. Recall Peter's vision. What was the sequel of it?
7. Recall the conversion of Saul and state what his great contribution to early Christianity is.

For Further Study

Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 123ff.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 51–53.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 267–275.

CHAPTER XX

LETTERS OF COUNSEL AND FRIENDSHIP

LETTERS are the most interesting form of literature. This is true because they are so human, personal, direct. They are transcripts of what people think and feel when they are natural and unaffected: that is why they are prized.

A common charge now made is that letter writing is a lost art. Probably this is due to the fact that we can communicate so readily with each other through telephone, telegraph, and radio. Then, too, distance has been eliminated by improved methods of travel, making it possible to see each other almost in the time it takes to write a letter. But in the old days people lived farther apart and traveling was slow and irksome. Visits were few and expensive. To get a letter then was an event, and, if it was not too personal, neighbors were asked to share it. This must be understood if the epistles of friendship contained in the New Testament are to be appreciated.

PICTURE OF CHURCH

Why the early Christians should have need of such letters becomes clear when a bird's-eye view is taken of the primitive church. A good way to secure such is to study a map of the Roman Empire in the first century of the Christian era. If, for

example, red pins are placed at every point which the apostles and missionaries influenced, we can see at a glance the large number of places reached and imagine some of the problems that arose. Distance was a constant factor to be reckoned with; so were poverty and persecution. Then, too, the church was engaged in pioneer work, and needed advice and information. Because of such conditions and others that will be indicated, needs arose which love and friendship alone could meet. The following are some of them.

Raw recruits.—Many of the Lord's followers were raw recruits and needed training and discipline. Among them were peasants and fishermen, artisans and sailors, who required to hear repeatedly the story of Jesus, lest they forget it. They also had to be shown how to live according to the standards Jesus set up. Counsel and friendship were needed, and these the apostles endeavored to give whenever it was humanly possible to do so. No one saw this more clearly than Paul, who wrote many letters and was constantly on the road, in order that he might be a faithful guide and comforter.

Many problems.—Every movement brings with it not merely new responsibilities but new problems. This was so in the church. Some of them had to do with the details of organization and others with public worship. The administration of the sacraments and the care of the poor also presented difficulties. Then, too, there were constant temptations to yield to false teaching and fanaticism. There were also questions dealing with the observance of ancient rites and customs, which troubled

the Christians for many years. How faithful the apostles were to them as they wrestled with these matters their epistles show on almost every page.

Far from the center.—It is always important to keep in touch with headquarters. This the church felt keenly. The apostles, while constantly on the road, could not be in every place. Thus the need arose to vitalize the relation between them and the most distant points. This was done by messages and messengers, by councils and conferences, by hurried visits and missionary journeys. Still another way was through letters of counsel and friendship, and of these many more were written than are in our Bible.

These are some of the conditions we must picture to ourselves, otherwise we cannot fully appreciate the importance of the letters that were written and now have a place in the New Testament.

The Kind of Letters Written

We can distinguish at least several kinds of them, as follows:

Personal.—There are several of them, but Philemon is distinctly such. The letters to Timothy and Titus are very intimate and personal, but are classed as Pastoral Epistles.

In his letter to Philemon, Paul deals entirely with a private matter and speaks a kind word for Onesimus, a runaway slave, whom he induced to return to his master. Paul was a prisoner at the time, but this fact did not conflict with the tone of his letter, which is full of Christian tenderness and friendship. In it Paul asked Philemon to deal

gently with Onesimus, whom he calls "my child born in my imprisonment." It was probably written between 60 and 61 A. D.

Pastoral Epistles.—The Pastoral Epistles are First and Second Timothy and Titus, and indicate how deeply Paul was interested in the organization and management of the church. They were written to promote greater efficiency in government. Because they were expecting Jesus to return to earth again, the Christians formed loose habits about the official management of the church. They had to be advised and directed. Paul saw this clearly, and consequently wrote his first letter to Timothy to give assistance. It proved so helpful that to this day it is considered a useful manual on organization and management.

Paul's second letter to Timothy was his farewell to his young friend and so to the church: soon after its writing occurred his death. In it he charges Timothy to be faithful and fearless. This he does skillfully by calling attention to his own confidence and courage.

> **I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—2 Timothy 1: 12.**

Having thus unbosomed himself, Paul proceeds to give advice:

> **Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**
>
> **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**

Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 Timothy 2: 1-3.

First Timothy was written between 64 and 67 A. D.; Second Timothy, about 67 A. D.; and Titus, probably between 64 and 65 A. D.

General Epistles.—There are seven General Epistles: James, First and Second Peter, First, Second, and Third John, and Jude. Since they were not addressed to any one congregation, but to the whole church, they are called General Epistles.

Of these James and First Peter were addressed to the same class of persons, namely, the Jewish Christians. James is a very practical book and has been called a volume on Christian Conduct. To him religion is a very matter of fact affair. He defines it as follows:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James 1: 27.

A great text James constantly uses is, "Faith without works is dead."

First Peter aims to give encouragement to persecuted Christians and emphasizes the importance of faithfulness.

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 1: 13.

Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.—1 Peter 2: 17.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the

devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.—1 Peter 5: 8.

He tries to encourage them by showing that the Gospel is the fulfillment of prophecy and that the Saviour is the Messiah. The Saviour had to suffer many things, therefore, "if one suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."

The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude warn against false teaching. Both books emphasize the importance of obeying authority and insist on living blameless lives. Some of the Christians had become impatient with restraint and wished to go their own way. To such conduct these Epistles were a protest.

The three Epistles of John are very precious to us because they are probably the last words of the disciple whom Jesus loved. They were written at the close of the first century and probably at Ephesus. The first of them is a beautiful meditation upon the coming of Jesus into our humanity to save and bless us. It is full of tenderness, profound feeling, and searching faith. Some of its passages young people are heard to repeat every Sabbath in their meetings. Notably among them are the following: walking in the light, 1 John 1: 7; confession of sin, 1 John 1: 8; the love of God and our sonship, 1 John 3: 1, 2.

The Second Epistle of John is very brief and was written to an individual church to warn it of error. It is full of solicitude, friendship, and counsel. His Third Epistle was written to an individual by the name of Gaius, whom he commends for his practice of keeping "open house" for the visiting missionaries.

Doctrinal Epistles.—There are many more doctrinal Epistles than we will consider here. We will mention only two—Romans and Hebrews.

The Epistle to the Romans is Paul's greatest work, and in it all the deep religious feeling and conviction of the man find expression. It was written at Corinth about 57 A. D., and just before his final visit to Jerusalem. He was hoping to visit Rome, and by this letter prepared the church for his coming. In this Epistle Paul set forth God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. This is "good news" for Paul, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.

> **God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Romans 5:8.**

> **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**
>
> **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.—Romans 8:35, 37.**

Paul brought his great mind to bear on the subject of salvation and has given us some of the most stirring passages in the New Testament. (See Romans 1:16; 5:1–6; 8:1–39.)

The Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to Jewish Christians, who were in danger of giving up their faith because of persecution. The Epistle aims to assure them that Christ will not fail them in their need.

> **For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.—Hebrews 2:18.**

The eleventh chapter has been called the Honor Roll of the Faithful, and is inspiring reading. As for the author of this Epistle, Origen, who lived in the third century, says, "God only knows who wrote it." Among the names associated with it as possible authors are Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, and Priscilla. The date of its writing cannot be determined, but it was probably between the martyrdom of Saint James in 63, and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

Epistles to churches.—These are First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and First and Second Thessalonians.

The first to see the light was First Thessalonians, which was written about 52 A. D. The church at Thessalonica was especially tried by paganism and needed encouragement. This Paul gave. Besides they needed instruction concerning the second coming of the Lord, which they believed was imminent. Paul wrote that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," and therefore advised the Thessalonians to be watchful and steadfast in their work. It is evident that Paul was misunderstood, so that his second Epistle had to be written. In both of them Paul is very comforting in what he has to say about the resurrection.

> **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.**
>
> **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.—1 Thessalonians 4: 13, 14.**

Galatians was written to head off teachers who would have made Christianity only a Jewish sect.

The letter was addressed to the churches in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. It is a very eloquent bit of writing, with passionate outbursts and vehement utterances. His great text is, "The just shall live by faith," and perhaps the finest verse in the epistle is the following:

> **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Galatians 2: 20.**

First and Second Corinthians were occasioned by various difficulties which had arisen. There were, for instance, various parties in the church, and these had to be restrained. Besides many people were indifferent and loose in their morals. Certain matters about the resurrection were also in question. To all these Paul gave faithful attention. His chapter on Love (1 Corinthians 13: 1–13) all of us know as one of the finest things in the Bible.

> **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.—1 Corinthians 13: 1.**

His resurrection passages are also unexcelled. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 12–58.)

The Epistle to the Colossians protests certain false teachings that crept into the church concerning angels. To Paul such doctrines seemed harmful to Christ's position as Saviour and Lord. So he wrote about the majesty of Jesus, and urged loyalty to him as the Head of the church.

The Epistle to the Ephesians was not addressed to any particular church and therefore has no reference to any special problem. In it Paul is free to discuss God's plan of salvation and, in connection with it, certain practical problems of daily life. His chapter on the Christian armor is probably best known. (See Ephesians 6: 10–20.)

Philippians is a rare book, and has been called Paul's "love letter." It was occasioned by a gift which he received from his friends. He gratefully acknowledges the gift and then proceeds to write about Jesus. He is at his best in the second chapter, verses 5–11, in which he deals with Christ's coming into the world to be our Saviour. It is said that he

> **made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: . . . and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Then, too, there is a fine passage about Paul's forward-looking heart (see Philippians 3: 13, 14), which was the inspiration of thousands in his day and is in no danger of losing any of its influence over us.

How God Used Them

We will never be able to estimate the good these letters of friendship have done. In the old days when the church was young they were like flashes of light come directly from heaven. They were read aloud, loaned to each other, copied, and distributed in order that all might know their contents.

In the course of time they found acceptance by

the side of the Old Testament, and were used in public worship and in schools. They were honored by God's Holy Spirit, and became a part of our Bible. To-day we consider them the Sacred Word of God. Through them God speaks to us as he did to his people in the past, and we, like them, are made wise unto salvation.

Study Topics

1. Recall some of the reasons that made the Epistles of the New Testament necessary? Did their authors know that they would ever be used as Scripture?
2. How many Epistles are there in the New Testament? Name them and their authors.
3. What occasioned the Epistle to Philemon?
4. Which Epistle gives us the most thorough-going account of God's plan for the salvation of man? Recall some of its great passages.
5. Why were the Pastoral Epistles written? Have they any value now?
6. In what Epistles do you find the most noteworthy passages on the resurrection? Recall them.

For Further Study

Goodspeed's *The Story of the New Testament.*
Gregory's *The Canon and Text of the New Testament,* pages 43–54.
Grubb's *The Bible,* pages 168–182.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew,* pages 124ff.
Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 207–236.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary.*

CHAPTER XXI

THE REVELATION

This is a strange book and hard to understand. Yet it is not intended to be such. On the contrary, it is supposed to be a "revelation," a writing in which certain matters are "uncovered and made plain." Perhaps the chief reason why it is so difficult to understand is due to the fact that it belongs to a type of books the like of which are no longer written, and in which the writers employed figures and symbols and other picturesque modes of expression, quite readily understood then but not so intelligible to-day.

The Times

Books of this kind multiply in times of calamity and hardship. In trouble and trial ordinary modes of speech are inadequate. If The Revelation was written by John in 68 or 69 A. D.—and some scholars think it was—there was every reason for its appearance. Nero was on the throne at Rome and his last days were gorged with horror and excess. No one suffered more at his hands than the Christians, whom he persecuted in the most refined and cruel manner. Besides, it was a time of fanaticism and rebellion in Palestine, the latter of which had to be suppressed by force of arms. Vespasian and his son Titus attended to this in such thorough fashion that they left behind them a trail of blood and ashes. Their siege and capture of Jerusalem sent a shiver through Jew and Christian alike.

If, however, The Revelation was written in 95 or 96 A. D.—and many scholars hold to this date —there was still great reason for its writing. Domitian reigned, and his program of persecution was full of rage and cruelty. The Empire reeled in perfidy and carnage, and no one suffered more than the church.

Such were the conditions that inspired John to write on the island of Patmos, where he was an exile, and to which he had been banished because of his devotion to Jesus Christ. He put all the passion of his great heart into the book; God looked after the result. Doctor Farrar says, "He wrote so well that his book became a rallying cry of Christian warriors." Doctor Beyschlag, another biblical scholar, says, "It is the great epic of Christian hope."

Condition of the Church

Someone has said of the book of Revelation, "It must be read by the lurid glare of burning cities, Jerusalem and Rome—and, it might be added, by the light of martyr fires." The extent to which the church suffered, both from within and without, John shows in the first three chapters. He calls the roll of the churches, notes their condition, and either offers or withholds praise.

Those named are Smyrna, Philadelphia, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Ephesus, and Laodicea. He knew them all and loved them. He was aware of all they suffered and the consequences which followed. Ephesus, for example, was harassed by false teachers and in danger of "leaving its first love." The poor churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia received unqualified praise for remaining

steadfast in the face of unspeakable temptations to compromise. Pergamum and Thyatira had fallen victims to corrupt teachers and heathen practices, which John condemned. Sardis was dead and Laodicea neither hot nor cold.

Such, then, were the times. On the one hand the church was persecuted by the Jews and on the other by pagan Rome. The first led in killing off some of the church's leaders, including Stephen, James, the brother of John, also James, the brother of the Lord; the second proceeded against the Christians as enemies of the state and foes of the human race. Because of such conditions the book was written, and with the distinct purpose of magnifying Jesus Christ, the power of his church, and the complete triumph to which it was destined. How the writer does this we will now see.

Visions of Hope

No matter how strange the book is, it leaves at least several very distinct impressions about the ultimate triumph of Christianity.

Picture of Christ.—If an army is to have fine spirit, it must believe in its general. The same is true of the church: it cannot be greater than its leader. John understood this and, therefore, believed that the only way to hearten the Christians was to portray the greatness of the Lord and Master. This he does with great skill.

John portrays the Saviour in all kinds of imagery and addresses him with many different names. In the great Court Scene in the fourth chapter, and which continues through the fifth, Jesus is introduced as "the Lion of Judah" and "the Lamb that

was slain." In another scene John speaks of him as "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," and also as "the Son of God," worthy of all honor. He taxes his powers of description and employs the following names: "The Bright Morning Star," "The White Horse of Victory," and "Loving Redeemer of Man." Twenty-nine times he designates Jesus as the "Lamb of God," and repeatedly refers to him as "Lord of lords" and "King of kings," the "Great Judge" who holds the keys of heaven and hell.

Such was John's way of heartening the Christians in dark and bitter days. He kept Jesus before them; he invited them to ponder his greatness; he inspired them with his triumphant redemption. To what length he went is seen by his method of matching Jesus against all the iniquity, terror, calamities, judgments, and persecutions imaginable, and in every scene thus enacted shows that he is above them all in his power and majesty. In other words, John shows the church that it has a Leader who is greater than all the hostile forces of the world. How he proceeds we will see next.

Hostility of world.—John knows that the Saviour has power to overcome all man's enemies. Therefore he introduces us very skillfully to three series of seven calamities and hardships, which take up the entire middle section of the book, and in every instance of which the Saviour emerges victorious.

1. *The Sealed Book.* (Revelation 5–8.) The first series of calamities is associated with the opening of the sealed book. Here is shown Jesus' power not merely to open the book, but to give deliverance to his people. The enemies he overcomes are the blood-red horse of war, the black

horse of famine, and the pale horse of death. He is able also to reward his martyred saints with the white robes of salvation, and is more than a match for all the great calamities and judgments that shake the world. He rides in triumph and is attended by the hosts of the redeemed who sing his praises in heavenly places.

2. *The Seven Angels with Trumpets.* (Revelation 8–16.) When the seventh seal is opened John introduces seven trumpeters, who sound their horns and announce other judgments, leading up to the final glorification of the saints. In their order the following scenes are enacted:

(*a*) Times of fire and hail mingled with blood;

(*b*) Burning mountains cast into the sea;

(*c*) The star Wormwood filling the earth with bitterness;

(*d*) Eclipses of the sun and moon;

(*e*) The opening of the bottomless pit and plagues of locusts and scorpions;

(*f*) Forces of destruction loosed in the Euphrates;

(*g*) Pictures of the complete triumph of Christ, who overcomes the Great Red Dragon, and who also worsts the Beasts.

3. *Bowls of Wrath.* (Revelation 15–20.) The supremacy and triumph of Christ continues with pictures of the certainty of judgment upon his foes. Angels appear who pour bowls of wrath upon the opposing sinful world. The calamities include noisome sores, death in the sea, rivers and springs turned to blood, scorching heat, drought, great phenomena in nature, and the final judgment upon all who oppose Christ and his kingdom.

To us these pictures are very perplexing; but to

the little church John's meaning was quite clear. To them it meant just one thing; the ultimate triumph of Christ and the church.

Scenes of victory.—From the nineteenth chapter on to the end are wonderful pictures of God's children vindicated. In this cycle of episodes we are shown Babylon fallen, the scarlet woman of persecution destroyed, and the kings of the world overcome. There are pictures also of Satan bound for a thousand years and the faithful raised and waiting for the general resurrection. These pictures present a wonderful panorama of lights and shadows, but finally the light predominates and the glory of the Lord abides.

New Jerusalem.—This book moves forward to a time of eternal happiness and bliss. Its closing chapters are refreshing reading and introduce the Paradise of God, or, as John calls it, The New Jerusalem, "in which there shall be no more tears, sorrow or crying, but God will wipe all tears from our eyes." (Revelation 21–22.)

In his picturesque way John presents the following scenes: The marriage supper of Jesus and his church, the complete overthrow of Satan and his kingdom, and the New Jerusalem coming down with all its hallowed associations, pastoral experiences of beauty and peace.

Note of Optimism

With such a climax the book of Revelation closes; and the Bible, which begins with a picture of the Garden of Eden, concludes with the unfolding of a Heavenly Paradise, for which Christians wait and toward which the church moves. Such a con-

summation is possible, for the church has a Leader who cannot be successfully hindered in his mighty purpose.

This book did just what it was designated to do: it inspired the church, comforted it in trial, and made it strong and courageous. Doctor Snowden, an eminent biblical scholar, says of it: "Back of all this lurid imagery, back of its battles and woes, stands the figure of the Lord Jesus. With him the New Testament began and with him it closes. Jesus is the everlasting Saviour, and beside him there is no other."

Study Topics

1. Indicate in a few words the purpose of the book of Revelation.
2. Why do you find it hard to read? Or if you have always found it easy to read, explain why.
3. How many series of visions does John use to show the greatness and glory of Jesus? Indicate them.
4. Which part means most to you?
5. Do you know of any hymns that have been based on some of the figures of speech used by John? If "Jerusalem, the Golden" is one of them, can you recall another?
6. What example of this type of literature have we in the Old Testament?

For Further Study

Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 124ff.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, on Revelation.
Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* pages 276–297.
Grubb's *The Bible*, pages 214–221.

PART III

THE BIBLE IN VARIOUS TONGUES

CHAPTER XXII

THE BIBLE AMONG THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Up to this point we have seen how the Bible came to be and how many centuries passed while it was being written and collected. We have also informed ourselves as to its contents, and perhaps value it more than ever. Now, however, in the remaining chapters of this book we will trace the many and interesting events that have brought it down to us, just as we have it in our own language and in the volumes now in hand.

The Bible in our day is a very complete book. In some of the editions are found maps, pictures, explanatory dictionaries, marginal notes and a concordance. Through the use of the concordance it is possible to find in a short time almost any passage of Scripture and what the Bible has to say on nearly every subject or theme. Its marginal notes indicate cross references, and these references give us shades of meaning and various points of view. There are also other devices that assist us in mastering this great book and its contents.

To come to us in this form required centuries of research and study. Strange handicaps had to be overcome. To be reproduced in our English language, ancient languages had to be mastered, old and damaged manuscripts had to be studied, copied,

and translated. What some of these perplexing problems were will become evident as we proceed. But to understand and appreciate them, we will have to go back to the beginning of the Christian Church and keep company with the great and good people through whose devotion and labor the Bible finally came to us.

The Bible in the Early Church

It has already been seen in another chapter that when Christianity began, the church had no other Bible than the Old Testament. When Jesus and the apostles preached in the synagogues, they used the Old Testament in public worship. This had been translated into Greek several hundred years before and, because the Hebrew texts were understood only by learned folk, the Greek translation was widely used among the people. The primitive church expected no other Bible, and it was not until later that our New Testament books were used in connection with the Old Testament. Before the end of the second century, however, the New Testament had assumed definite form, and in the century following was accepted with the Old as the inspired Word of God. This was due to several facts.

A larger Bible necessary.—The Scriptures were widely read in the early Christian centuries, because the people needed them. The times were hard and full of trial, conflict, and persecution. Nothing was needed more than those writings that contained the words and teachings of Jesus, the counsel and friendship of Paul, Peter, and James. These were helpful to the Christians in their conflict

with the Jews on the one hand and the Romans on the other. Because of these and other conditions, the Gospels and the Epistles were written, copied, translated, and circulated. This, of course, was also true of the Old Testament.

In going back to those times we discover how widely read the Scriptures were and how, in public and private, people meditated upon their contents. Its great passages were constantly quoted and increasingly cherished. In training for church membership special consideration was given to the Scriptures, so that young people, as well as the mature, were well informed. Traditions state that the Christians sang psalms while at work, rehearsed the sayings of the Lord, talked about the letters of Paul, and did many other things to keep God and his Word in mind.

Record chests.—Nearly every church, however poor, had a library of sacred writings. Some of them were fortunate enough perhaps to have original copies of the writings of Paul, John, Luke, and Peter. Others had to be content with copies of such portions of the Scriptures that had been made available by leaders in the church as they traveled here and there. How these contributed to the Bible in our own language will be observed later.

Bibles hard to get.—To-day it is comparatively easy to secure a Bible at any book store, and at a price making it possible for rich and poor to have one. In the primitive church this was not the case. Books then were made by hand, and writing and transcribing them was laborious work. Many Christians copied their own, and sometimes did this very imperfectly. Frequently scribes and slaves did the

work, and some of them not being educated men, errors, changes, or omissions would get into the manuscripts and books. Then, too, translations were made in various tongues; for wherever the church went its Bible went too. Sometimes these versions failed to express truly what was written in the original texts and disputes about the meaning followed. By the end of the third century copies had been made in Greek, Syriac, Old Latin, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Coptic languages.

Original manuscripts gone.—We must remember that the revisers and translators who have brought the Bible to us in our modern tongues did not have the use of any of the original manuscripts. These manuscripts disappeared long since; and this we can understand when we recall the terrible persecutions to which the early Christians were subjected. The Roman emperors knew how the Christians valued the Scriptures, and afflicted them by insisting upon the destruction of these writings. That there is anything left of them is one of the wonders of the age. These conditions we must keep in mind, otherwise we cannot appreciate the terrible handicaps which had to be overcome before the Bible could be ours.

Knowing these facts, we often wonder just what sources have been available to biblical scholars, so that through their labor of love and sacrifice, the Bible became our heritage. This will interest us next.

Sources Available

If we could transport ourselves to the third century of the Christian era and visit the churches

in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, and Rome, in search for scriptural material, we would be surprised at the "finds" we would make. Perhaps we might not be able to recognize some of the books when we saw them, for they are so unlike our own.

We would have to be willing to examine dressed skins, papyri, and leaves of parchment. We would be compelled to untie dust-covered and fragile scrolls and rolls, turn parchment leaves as they are held together by leather thongs, and we would have to become accustomed to new and strange characters in the writing. Among the things we would see are the following:

Old Testament.—In the most favored churches, in spite of the persecutions that impoverished them, is to be found the Old Testament in Hebrew and in the Greek. The Greek text would be the best known, simply because it was the Bible of the people. Possibly these Scriptures would be in the form of rolls and protected by cylindric containers, or, more likely, in a parchment edition, very similar to one of our modern books.

Apocryphal books.—Especially among Gentile Christians some of the apocryphal books would be in the Record Chest. These books were those in which the ideas they contained were expressed in visions and symbols. They tell of events that have occurred, or it was supposed were about to occur. Perhaps among the books would be the following: First and Second Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Bel the Dragon, and First, Second, and Third Maccabees.

New Testament writings.—Everywhere there

would be copies of the Gospels, the Epistles, the Acts and Revelation. By this time the New Testament canon had been fixed and the books accepted just like our own. Perhaps very few churches would be fortunate enough to have complete collections.

Writings of the Fathers.—The great and good men who led the church in the second and the third centuries are known to us as "the Fathers." They rightly came to this name because they fathered and defended the church in times of trial and crisis. False teachers arose in many places and led the Christians into error. Fanatics with strange ideas about the duty of the church and its mission appeared. Some of them forbade marriage, others loyalty to the state. In meeting issues of this kind a large bulk of Christian literature came into existence, which is valuable because it contains many quotations from manuscripts and versions in use at the time. Among the writers are some of the greatest names on the church's Roll of Honor, namely, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement, and Origen.

Versions.—In churches removed far from the center of things in Rome or Jerusalem would be new and crude translations in the vernacular of the people. These also were quite numerous, as a later chapter will make plain, and they were made by enthusiastic and consecrated souls who wanted the followers of Jesus Christ to be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

The Fact to Remember

In this very period, often so dark and disappointing, were taken the first steps in the Bible's long

journey to us. Gradually it came to be the mightiest factor in the lives of people so that they copied it, preached it, and translated it. For its preservation they suffered intolerable losses, but they defended it. They tried to heed its precepts and endeavored to realize its great dreams for man. What happened cannot be fully estimated; but this we know: God honored his Word and made it mightier than empires, so that they crumbled into ruins, but the Scriptures abide to this day. Its enemies repeatedly sought its destruction, but, hid in the heart of man, in caves and catacombs, and conserved in papyri and parchment, it has come to us full of promise and divine energy. "The great treasure," says Doctor Gladden, "is here, and he who with open mind and reverent spirit seeks it will find wisdom amd salvation in it."

Study Topics

1. Does your church have a record chest, or possibly a fire-proof safe? What is kept in them?
2. What were the contents of such chests in the early days of Christendom?
3. In Luke 4: 15–20 is recounted an experience of the Saviour. What Scriptures did he use? Was this true of the disciples and the early missionaries of the church?
4. Were there any efforts made to collect the writings of the apostles? What did this lead to?
5. Give a brief account of the Bible-reading habits of the early Christians.
6. What has become of the original manuscripts of the New Testament Scriptures? What would be the chief benefit, if any, should they be found?

7. Who were "The Fathers" of the early church? Look up in encyclopædia Justin Martyr, Polycarp, and Ignatius.

For Further Study

Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 1–10.
Smyth's *The Bible in the Making*, pages 165ff.
Hunting's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 1–16, 45–53, 64–74.
Snowden's *The Making and Meaning of the New Testament*, pages 41–61.
Grubb's *The Bible*, pages 152–167.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 17–20.

THE OLD CODEX AT SHECHEM

From a photograph by Dwight L. Elmendorf. An excellent example of workmanship and safe-keeping.

CHAPTER XXIII

EARLY TRANSLATIONS AND QUOTATIONS

THE Christian Church began with a great outburst of spiritual power on the Day of Pentecost. The story is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts, where we are told what happened soon afterward—each went his way preaching Christ. Among those who carried the gospel of salvation were "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judæa, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians."

These people broadcast what they knew about Jesus, and did their work so well and extensively that the record of it constitutes a great chapter in Christian achievement. In less than a century and a half the Scriptures, both Old and New, had become the glad possession of many thousands. The people had churches to shelter them and the Bible to direct and comfort them.

EARLY VERSIONS

Christianity is a missionary religion; that is, it shares its blessings with others. It was so in the beginning; it is so now. One of the things it gives away is the Bible, and it does this because it believes that it is "the power of God unto salvation unto all who believe." The early church believed

and practiced this, and consequently in the first great missionary period, which included more than three centuries, the Bible got into many translations. Inasmuch as these must have been made from *earlier texts*, scholars see their value in our efforts to improve the text of our own Bible. At all events they must be considered because they created a condition which necessitated the first great revision by Jerome and through which our own Bible came to us. In this chapter we will note some of the early versions and indicate their importance.

The Syriac version.—This is of interest to us because it is in the language of the people among whom Jesus moved and lived. There are traditions which claim that the Syrian New Testament was prepared by Mark. Be that as it may, Eusebius, the great church historian, knew about the version, and so did several other great leaders in the church. Scholars agree that the Syriac Bible was produced not later than 150 A. D., and that it is thus the oldest version of the Christian Scriptures. A very old and valuable manuscript of it is now in Cambridge University.

Primarily, it is of value to us because it *followed closely the Hebrew text* in its translation of the Old Testament, so that the Syriac Old Testament was quite like our own. That it was influenced by Jewish thought is indicated by the New Testament books it contained. It differs in the arrangements of the books and omits the Revelation and seven General Epistles. This version was very popular, because it was simple in style and reflected the literary genius of the people. It had a wonderful

career and missionaries carried it to Persia, India, and China.

Egyptian versions.—Christianity had an early start in Egypt and translations were made before the end of the second century. By that time the church was firmly established in the Nile Valley and became the fostering mother of many and great missionary enterprises, some of which extended as far as Abyssinia. In Egypt translations were made in three dialects and were widely used not merely in churches but in schools. In translating the Old Testament *the Septuagint was used,* thus affording us another approach to that ancient text. The best known is in the Coptic language and was made before the close of the second century. In spite of great historic changes involving divisions in the church, this text has been kept free from additions and changes. Scribes and scholars from the twelfth century on have taken great pains to protect the same.

Ethiopian version.—In the Acts we have an account of Philip's experience on the road to Gaza, and how the Ethiopian Treasurer of Queen Candace accepted Christianity. Whether this officer had anything to do with the spread of Christianity in his own country we do not know. We can only guess that he did. However, we know that the church was established among the Ethiopians in Abyssinia about the headwaters of the Nile at an early date and that the Scriptures were translated soon after the Coptic version appeared. They were in quite general use by the fourth century, and by that time the first steps in compiling a hymnal had already been taken. Chrysostom, who lived in

347–407 A. D., knew about the Ethiopian version and refers to it. It is the oldest manuscript in Ethiopic literature, of which it was not merely the foundation but the inspiration. This translation *was made from the Septuagint.*

Gothic version.—The Gothic translation is largely a matter of fragments, but is referred to to show how southeastern Europe got the Scriptures. For this translation Ulfilas is given credit. He was not a native of the land and got into it through no plans of his own. The truth is that his parents had been taken captives by the warlike Goths and consequently he too suffered at their hands. But his great Christian heart did not retaliate. On the contrary, he rendered his enemies the greatest service possible by preparing an alphabet for their language and translating the Bible in the same. This was done some time before 382 A. D., in Moesia on the shores of the Black Sea. Of this important work only fragments remain, but what is available of it indicates that in his *translation he followed the Greek.* A tradition states that he did not include the two books of the Kings because he felt the warlike Goths would be unduly incited to war.

Armenian version.—Between Mesopotamia on the east and the land of the Goths was the ancient land of Armenia, south of the Black Sea, and the proud possessors of Mount Ararat. The gospel missionaries early penetrated this district and established the church, which for a time used the Syrian Scriptures, but later had their own. This was made from the Greek Septuagint, which, so scholars state, "it fits closely as a glove the hand." This was first available between 396 and 430 A. D. It is of

interest to us because of the unusual order of the New Testament books, which is as follows: Gospels, Acts, General Epistles, Revelation, Letters of Paul, followed by an epistle of the Corinthians to Paul, Hebrews, Timothy, and the rest.

Other versions.—There were many translations made during these early centuries, but we do not have time and space to consider them here. Some of them were made about the time of the Vulgate;[1] others in the next two centuries after its appearance; among them may be mentioned the Slavonic and the Arabic.

There were many versions in the Old Latin, but only two will be noted here. Both were made in the second century: the one is the Alexandrian version, made in northern Africa; the other is the Italic, so called because it was produced in Italy. The latter is the better of the two, and shows more literary merit than the former. Both, however, followed the Greek Septuagint. While only fragments remain, they are of value to us because they found their way to Gaul, Ireland, and Britain and so remotely influenced the biblical scholars through whose efforts the Bible finally reached us. More will be said of Old Latin versions in the next chapter.

All these versions which we have mentioned are valuable because they connect us with the earliest manuscripts of our Bible. Besides, they reflect the genius of our religion and help us to understand the secret of its wonderful success in the first four centuries of our era. Keeping these facts in mind, we see our English Bible is like a giant tree with

[1] See page 223.

its roots deep down in a varied but rich soil, which is Hebraic, Grecian, Syrian, Coptic, and Roman, and under its protecting branches all the nations of the world find security and peace.

Writings of the Fathers

A considerable time before the first great revision of our Bible was made a vast literature grew up which was very rich in biblical material and interpretation. These works quoted freely from the Old and New Testament manuscripts and versions existing at the time. In our own day these writings are the object of keen interest and have opened a profitable field in biblical study and research. When we read the quotations which some contain, it makes us feel that the original New Testament documents are speaking to us, for from them they were drawn. In this connection we refer to them briefly, and in the hope that doing so will lead to further study and investigation.

1. *Epistle of Barnabas.* This, if the opinion of the early church is to be respected, was written by Barnabas, the companion of Paul. Modern scholars set this opinion aside and believe it was written by someone later. It is not a great work and has significance simply because *it quotes sayings of Jesus.* It was found by Doctor Tischendorf bound up with the Sinaitic Manuscript, which will subsequently be discussed.

2. *Epistle of Clement.* This is more valuable, because it is known that its author had seen the apostles, conversed with them, and was greatly impressed by their preaching. Bishop Lightfoot wrote years ago that this epistle was the most

important writing outside of the Holy Scriptures. It was addressed to Corinth and *quotes many sayings of the Lord.*

3. *Shepherd of Hermas.* This was written by Hermas, an ex-slave and a gifted lay worker in the church at Rome. It is an allegory and reminds us of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.* In it are visions, commandments, parables, and similitudes. It reflects the Saviour's teachings and quotes some of his parables and great words. It was read in Christian Churches nearly two hundred years and had a place in some of the oldest manuscripts of the Bible, notably Codex Sinaiticus.

4. *Epistles of Saint Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna.* These have many allusions to New Testament writings and are valuable for critical purposes.

5. *Apologies and Dialogue with Trypho by Justin Martyr.* These were written before the middle of the second century. Justin quotes from memory and, therefore, is not always accurate. This is explained by the fact that there was a scarcity of manuscripts, for persecutions were almost constant in his day and many texts were destroyed. He himself suffered a martyr's death. He quotes from the Sermon on the Mount and Christ's last commission to the disciples.

6. *Second and Third Century Fathers.* Though their names are among the greatest in the church, these we can only mention. Among them are Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. These were eminent men, and their skill in debate, power as preachers, and learning as theologians challenge admiration.

An Inspiring Picture

Such in barest outline is the story of our Bible in the first three centuries. Before the church entered the fourth century the Scriptures were widely read and perpetuated in many languages. Through many literary streams they passed on and on, from one age to another, to influence and purify life. These are Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Armenian, Ethiopic, Coptic, and Old Latin. That this should be so is a great tribute to the Bible, and helps us to appreciate the next great event in its unwearied journey to us.

Study Topics

1. In connection with the Syrian Bible, look up the story of Abgarus and his letter to the Saviour.
2. We have seen in this chapter that Christianity in several centuries had gained a foothold in the leading countries of the time. How do you account for this?
3. Have some one prepare a five-minute report on Egyptian versions.
4. What advantage is it to us to have copies of these ancient documents, even if some of them are little more than fragments?
5. Why are the writings of the church Fathers important to our study? They quoted freely the sayings of Jesus; how did they become familiar with them?
6. To your mind what are some of the great problems that translators have to face? Did you ever translate anything from another language into English? What were your difficulties?

For Further Study

Encyclopædia Britannica.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, on the Versions.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 58ff.
Smyth's *How We Got the Bible*, pages 11–29.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 17–22.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE LATIN REVISED BIBLE

WHEREVER Christianity went in those early days in which it was founded the people wanted and needed the Scriptures. Besides, the missionaries who went about preaching Christ and organizing churches sought to supply them. Consequently, copies and translations were made and many versions followed, some of which were imperfectly done. Good resulted in spite of this, for it led people to desire improved and uniform texts. The result was a translation of such great literary quality that for more than one thousand years it has had first place in the church, and even to this day is the pride and glory of Roman Catholics. This is the translation which was made by Saint Jerome, and is known as "The Vulgate," because it was in the language of the common people.

How it came to be we will now consider.

THE SITUATION

To understand the circumstances that produced the Vulgate it was necessary in the previous chapter to picture the progress of the church in the first three centuries of the Christian era. By the end of that period the pioneers of Christianity had carried the gospel to the four corners of the civilized world. This created an unusual situation.

The great need.—When we remember that the Scriptures had to be copied by hand, and while we may be sure that the utmost care was taken, we can readily see what happened. Mistakes would be made in copying, lines would be omitted, words misspelled, grammatical changes would occur, and marginal notes would be introduced into the text. How this happened we can understand from our own experience in transcribing lessons in school, where mistakes are made even under the vigilance of our teachers. Just this occurred in transcribing and translating the Scriptures. Consequently, there grew up a need for an authoritative text, one that would be faithful to the original writings and correctly express what their authors intended.

Old Latin texts.—During the first three centuries of the Christian era changes in language were taking place in the life of the people. For a long time Greek was the language of culture, but gradually, as Rome extended her authority, her tongue displaced the former. At Alexandria, in Northern Africa, which had been made a great commercial center, the people prided themselves in their language and used the Old Latin to make the Scriptures known to the masses. The same was true in Southern Gaul and at Carthage, where translations were made. Many of these versions lacked literary merit, but were acceptable to the people. By the end of the third century there were many copies in the Old Latin, and these gave such evidence in variations of text that considerable confusion resulted. This, of course, could not long continue unchallenged.

Uncertainty in defense.—Nowhere was the embar-

rassment quite so distressing as in those quarters where Christianity had to be defended. In the early days of the church there were, as you possibly have seen in your study of history, instances when keen intellects challenged the Christian missionaries and the doctrines they taught. Nothing gave their foes greater delight than when they could point out discrepancies in the Sacred Scriptures and evidences of contradictory statements. Of course no one felt this more keenly than the wisest and the most cultured in the church, and it was largely through their insistence upon a pure and uncorrupted text that the Latin Revised Version was finally made. After Constantine recognized Christianity as the state religion, and it became popular among the higher classes, the inevitable happened. The church ordered a new translation. This, as we have noted before, was the Vulgate.

The Vulgate

Somewhere God always has the folk he needs when great tasks are to be performed. In this instance he had as his servants two great men, namely, Bishop Damascus and Saint Jerome. Damascus (366–384) thoroughly understood the embarrassment that was felt throughout the church and earnestly desired to relieve it. Seeing the need of a new and uniform text, he appealed to one of the most brilliant men of the times to make it possible. This appeal was addressed to Jerome, who responded favorably to it and accepted the task imposed. What followed comprises another glowing chapter in the story of our Bible and how it came to us.

Jerome.—Eusebius Hieronymus, or better known

as Jerome, was well born and singularly trained for the work he had been requested to do. Born of rich parents in Stridon (340), on the border of Dalmatia and what we now call Czecho-Slovakia, Jerome had every advantage in education and culture. He was privileged to study in Rome under the celebrated Donatus, whose spirit he caught and whose vast knowledge of rhetoric and literature he made his own. Besides this, he enjoyed the benefits of extensive travel and visited many of the leading literary centers of the time. He delighted in theology and studied it in Gaul. He was a many-sided man and was welcome everywhere for his wit and great learning.

The dream that changed his career.—While traveling in the east he contracted a fever which compelled him to tarry at Antioch. There, in his sickness, he dreamed a dream that changed his career. In it he seemed to be before the Judgment Seat of Christ, who questioned him about himself. Being asked who he was, he answered that he was "a Christian." He received, however, a stern answer: "You deceive yourself: you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian; for where your treasure is there also is your heart." The result of this experience led to his leaving his studies and to devoting the rest of his life to the service of the church.

Meeting the task.—Jerome and Damascus were fast friends and in correspondence. After his convalescence in 374, he went into solitude at Chalcis near Antioch for discipline, study, prayer, and meditation. Some time later he returned to Rome and took up the work which made him famous.

At the outset Jerome recognized the possibility

of engendering jealousy and opposition. He knew human nature and realized that prejudices of all kinds might hinder him. But he proceeded to the task, and by 383 A. D. finished his translation of the Gospels. Shortly after he completed the Acts of the Apostles. In due course followed the rest of the New Testament. Having rendered this signal service, he revised the Old Latin Psalter.

At this juncture, 384 A. D., occurred the death of his great friend, Damascus, and the accession of a new bishop who had no interest in the improvement of the Scripture text. Jerome, thus interrupted in his labor of love, proceeded to Palestine, visited Egypt, and later returned to settle at Bethlehem (389 A. D.). Here, while presiding over a monastery, he studied Hebrew and became acquainted with the Old Testament, the tongue in which it was written. After fifteen years of study and labor he completed his translation of the Old Testament, which, together with the New, later became the accepted and authoritative Scriptures of the church. This great work was done between 390 and 405 A. D.

Reception of the Vulgate.—We would, of course, expect this great work to be received with unalloyed joy and thanksgiving. This, however, was not the case. While his friends and even his enemies recognized its greatness, his translation had to win its way. This was due to several reasons.

1. A large number of the priests and bishops were satisfied with the Old Latin Texts. Especially was this so in Northern Africa and Southern Gaul.

2. With others the version was unacceptable because they did not like Jerome, who had a hot

temper, keen wit, and a sharp tongue in debate. His great learning and brilliancy provoked jealousy.

3. Many great leaders in the church felt that Jerome had unduly neglected the Septuagint, which was popular and by many people considered equally inspired with the Old Hebrew text.

But the superior literary excellence of the Vulgate was bound to score at last. Gradually its influence was felt among scholars, students, and translators. Africa, Gaul, and Britain accepted it. Almost from the first Rome accepted and preferred it. Pope Gregory declared his preference for it, so that his missionaries used it far and wide. The best that can be said for it is that for more than one thousand years it had the right of way, and in 1546, after slight revision, the Council of Trent decreed it to be the authentic Bible of the Catholic Church.

Great Influence of the Vulgate

As stated before, Jerome's own generation gave him abuse rather than gratitude. But he had wrought a great work, and God honored it. In the course of time it was cherished everywhere. Copies of it multiplied in almost every center of the church. Especially was this true in the monasteries, where finely engraved editions, with marginal engravings, gilted letters and embossed titles, were made. It came to be considered a great literary achievement and extensively influenced the liturgies and hymns of the church. Its influence was felt in prayer books and devotional writings. No one valued it more than the great men who centuries later gave us the King James Authorized Version, in which are reflected its fluent style and

well-balanced sentences. Dr. D. C. Somerville writes as follows: "Jerome's Vulgate served to introduce the ordinary man of Italy and in the West, the man who could read but was no scholar, to the actual text of the Scriptures."[1]

The Vulgate is a great literary achievement, which more than anything else made the Scriptures the foundation and inspiration of that wonderful civilization that continues to this day.

Study Topics

1. Explain why there were so many versions of the Sacred Scriptures in the times of Jerome. How many versions can you recall?
2. Look up the life of Jerome and give a five-minute report on the same.
3. Why was the Greek language supplanted? Did this make any difference to Scripture texts?
4. What does the word "Vulgate" mean?
5. What versions of the Bible were most in use just before Jerome's version appeared?
6. How do you account for the opposition that met the appearance of the Vulgate?
7. What is its position in the church to-day?

For Further Study

Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 138–168.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 31–35.
Stock's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 71ff.
Severn's *Makers of the Bible*, pages 71–78.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, on Versions.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 17–22.

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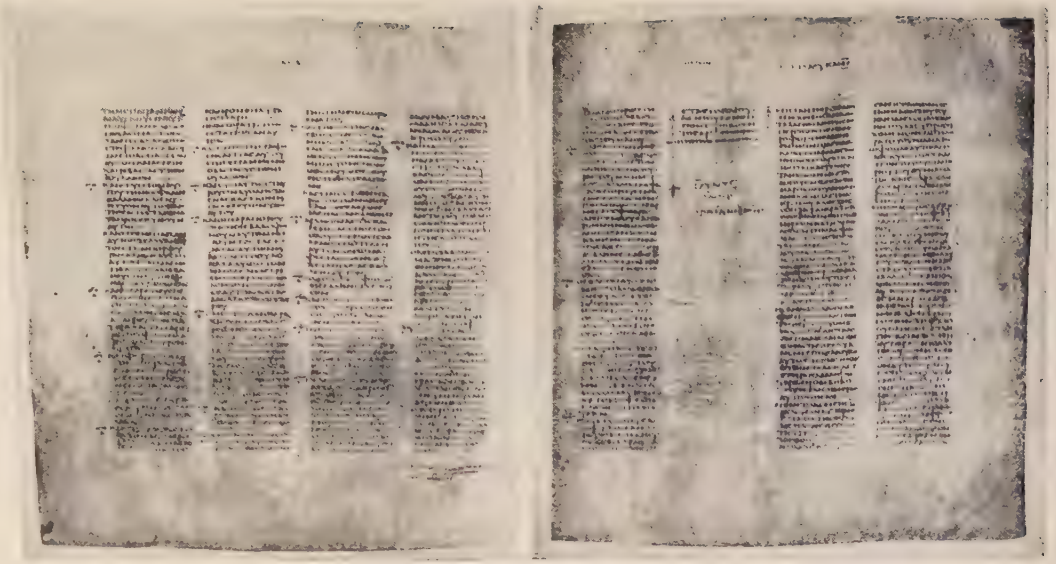
CHAPTER XXV

ANCIENT BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS

If you have ever visited a great library or museum, you probably will recall the thrill you had when you saw for the first time the original manuscript of a favorite author. You cannot forget the group of interested folk about the showcase and what they had to say about the document. Someone insisted that the author must have used a stub pen, while still another was sure he used a quill. The handwriting, the color of the ink, the corrections and erasures likewise provoked discussion. There were many more things observed, but what meant most to you was the fact that you saw the handiwork of an old friend and knew exactly what he wrote. It was there in black and white.

How fortunate we would be if we had in our possession the original manuscripts of the persons who wrote the Bible! Instantly the repository where they were kept would become the center of the world's interest. Saintly men and women, learned and cultured folk would consider no sacrifice too great to secure a view of the writings, and, if possible, facsimile copies of the same. But this perhaps will never be. So far as we know there is not anywhere so much as a fragment of the original manuscripts of the Bible writers.

Fortunately, however, investigators interested in the Scriptures have been ceaseless in their efforts



MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERED BY TISCHENDORF ON MOUNT SINAI
Reduced one fifth from the fac-simile edited by Professor Lake and published by the Clarendon Press (Oxford and London). See pages 233-234.

to explore ancient libraries, literary chests, seats of ancient schools and monasteries, with the result that we have very old manuscripts, directly traceable to original documents, to help us in our study. The story of the manuscripts is full of dramatic interest, as we will see.

Manuscripts

There are many Bible manuscripts, but they are not of equal importance. Some are on parchment, vellum, and papyrus. Because of the fragile nature of papyrus, manuscripts written on it are less numerous and what we have are fragmentary. Yet because of their early date they are exceedingly valuable. The others are more numerous, and some of them in excellent state of preservation.

Kinds of manuscripts.—The manuscripts that we value most are in two types of writing. The oldest are written in capital letters and without any division between the words. These are known as *uncial manuscripts*. If John 3:16 should appear in this form of writing, using the English alphabet, it would look as follows:

GODSOLOVEDTHEWORLDTHATHEGAVE
HISONLYBEGOTTENSON.

At a glance you can see how difficult it is to read a text thus written. But in this way many manuscripts were copied centuries ago in Greek, Hebrew, and other languages. They are very old and connect us with the early centuries of the Christian era. Of this kind there are less than three hundred.

Later manuscripts were written in quite another way. The time came when a kind of script gained

the vogue, and, because the writing was in a "running hand," which could be more easily written, copies could be multiplied with less labor and in a much shorter time. Of this kind there are nearly three thousand manuscripts available. The oldest of the "*Cursive manuscripts*"—for so they are called —goes back to the ninth century, while, on the other hand, the uncial manuscripts go back to the fourth century.

Fragments.—If we should go extensively into the documentary history of the Bible, we would sooner or later be greatly impressed by the large number of fragments, mostly in papyrus, that have been discovered. One such discovered contains over one half of the first chapter of Matthew, and was written in capital letters and dates from the third century. Another has been found, which was written about the same time, that contains chapters 8 and 9 of Paul's letter to the Romans. Then there is also a fifth-century Gospel fragment of nearly seven hundred lines, in which the Sermon on the Mount is given in almost verbal perfection. No doubt more will be available in the future, for consecrated scholars are continuing their investigations, and there is no telling what a day may bring forth.

Perhaps the most interesting finds are the Oxyrinchus Papyri, found in Egypt by the exploring party directed by Dr. B. P. Grenfell and Dr. A. S. Hunt. Among many others, two leaves of papyrus, containing sayings of Jesus, were found; the one in 1897, the other in 1903.

The following verses selected from the one discovered in 1897 are of interest:

"Jesus saith, Cast out first the beam that is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

"Jesus saith, Wherever there are two they are not without God, and if one is alone anywhere, I say I am with him.

"Raise the stone, there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there I am."

The leaf found in 1903 was a surveyor's list of measurements. On the back of it are, among other sayings, the following samples:

"Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished, he shall reach the Kingdom, and having reached the Kingdom, he shall rest.

"Jesus saith, Everything that is not before thy face and that which is hidden from thee shall be revealed to thee.

"For there is nothing hidden which shall not be made manifest, nor buried which shall not be raised."

Highly Treasured Manuscripts

Strange things happen in the course of time. Nothing is more wonderful than how manuscripts and documents that were jealously put away in monasteries and catacombs years ago are seeing again the light of day. In comparatively recent years manuscripts were discovered that are of supreme importance and have already helped us to improve and correct the text of our Bible. Of them the most famous are the following:

Sinaitic MS.—The finding of the Sinaitic manu-

script reads like romance and deserves more time than we can give it here. It was found by one of the most distinguished scholars of the last century, Doctor Tischendorf, who gave all his life to research and deserved to be thus rewarded. In 1844 he visited the East, and in Saint Catherine's Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai, made the discovery. He found it in a basket in which, among other things, were old parchments that were used, as the occasion required, to start fires. Upon examining the parchments he was surprised to discover that they were copies of the Septuagint Old Testament.

He was allowed to take with him about forty sheets and returned to Germany to confer with his friends. Subsequently he hoped through influential friends in Egypt to secure the rest of the manuscript, but with no success. About fifteen years later (1859), through the help of the Russian emperor, he tried again, and, after considerable waiting, secured the entire manuscript. This is now in the Library of Saint Petersburg (now Petrograd), but facsimiles of it have been made and are in all the great libraries of the world.

This is very valuable, because it is the most complete manuscript of the Old and New Testaments yet found. It contains the New Testament complete and some apocryphal books. It was written in four columns to the page and shows evidence of skilled workmanship. Doctor Tischendorf believed that this must have been one of the fifty copies that were especially made by Emperor Constantine in 331 A. D., indicating, therefore, that it is very old.

As an example of the great value of these manu-

scripts, it is interesting to observe that this throws light upon a passage in the concluding chapter of Mark which has been questioned. *The last twelve verses of Mark, now in our Bible, are not in this manuscript*, which concludes Mark with the eighth verse. Many other textual contributions might be indicated, but this cannot be done here. This manuscript is known among scholars as Codex Aleph.

Vatican MS.—This also has a great history. For many centuries before it was found it reposed in the Vatican Library at Rome, where it is now jealously guarded. Scholars are of the opinion that it is older than the Sinaitic MS., but it is not as complete. However, in the number of books it contains it agrees with it, and in the character of its workmanship the same is true. There are three columns to a page, and the writing is in capital letters. Having been written on vellum, its 759 leaves are fairly well preserved. However, it lacks Genesis 1–46, which is unfortunate, for probably the first page of this section could tell us directly when and by whom it was written. There are wanting also Psalms 95 to 137, and all the New Testament after Hebrews 9: 14.

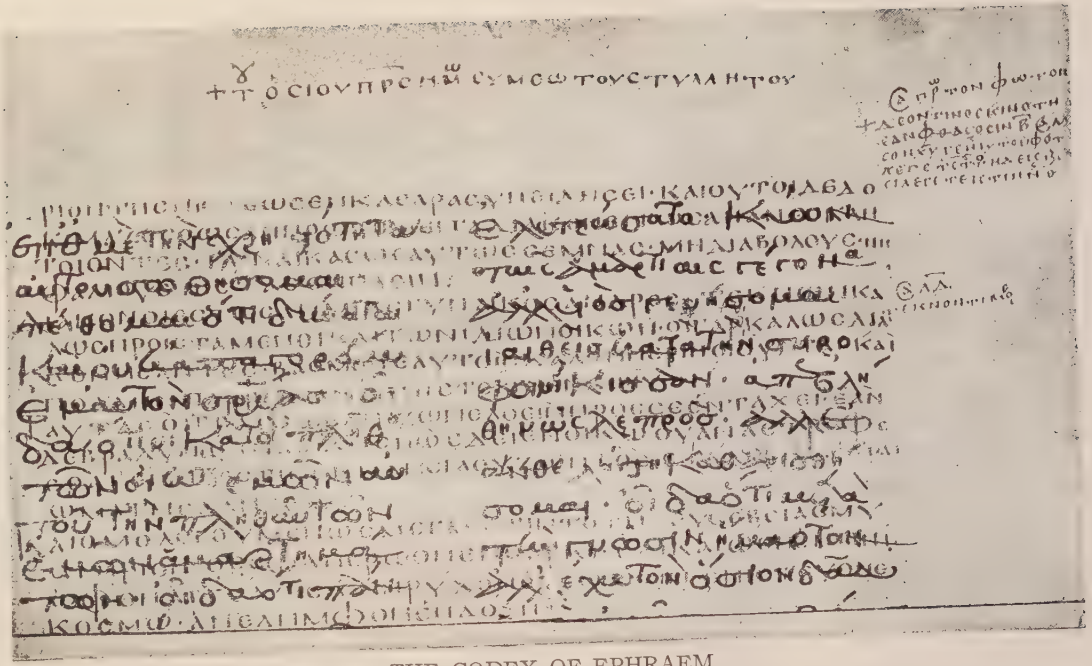
This work came to notice through the efforts of Doctor Tregelles, a gifted textual scholar, but who was greatly hindered in his work by the overzealous and suspicious priests who guarded it. Through Pope Pius IX, however, facsimiles have been made and these are available to modern scholars.

There are many interesting matters to note about it. One of them is the fact that it was retraced by some one who feared the original

writing might fade. Then, too, it reveals the habits of the copyist, who was not averse to crowding or abbreviating words as he came to the end of a line. Like the Sinaitic MS., this omits the doubtful passages of Mark, to which we referred in a former paragraph. To scholars this is known as Codex B.

Alexandrian MS.—This manuscript was given to Charles I, of England, by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1628, seventeen years too late to be of service to the great men who prepared the King James version. It is now in the British Museum and a much sought treasure. Among all the great manuscripts we possess, this is the only one that states who made it. An Arabic inscription, on one of the pages, states that it was written "by the hand of Thekla the Martyr."

The manuscript is in four volumes and numbers seven hundred and seventy-three leaves. The Old Testament sections lack only ten leaves, but the New Testament is more defective, for it bears evidence of mutilation. There are two columns to a page and average about forty-one lines each. The writing is neatly done and shows evidence in the third volume of the Old Testament that it was written by a different hand. For the sake of ornament the beginnings of the books are written in red ink, and here and there this is true of new paragraphs, which invariably open with large letters. While it is later than those mentioned above, it is quite valuable to critical study. It is of interest to note that beside our New Testament books, it includes an Epistle of Clement of Rome and a homily commonly known as Second Clement, and which was written during the second century. It



THE CODEX OF EPHRAEM

Notice under the modern writing the fainter letters of the old Bible that had been rubbed out.

is known as Codex A and facsimiles are available for study and research.

Codex Ephraem.—This is very interesting, inasmuch as it is a palimpsest, or rescript manuscript. That is to say, it is a manuscript the leaves of which have had their original contents rubbed off to make room for other writing. Evidently, when this was done, parchment was scarce and the writer therefore appropriated it. But the strange thing is that much of the original writing persists in appearing through the latter that was superimposed, thus making the manuscript an interesting one for study. (See picture.) The original has had rough treatment and its glory has departed. But enough remains to show that it was at the time a fine old document of our Bible, and included both Old and New Testaments. There remain now only two hundred and nine leaves, with a single column to a page, large uncial letters in the text, and slight evidence of ornamentation. These fragments are now in the Royal Library at Paris and portions of it have been reproduced. Scholars refer to it as Codex C.

Such are the four great manuscripts of the Bible now available for textual criticism and biblical research. They have already helped us in improving and correcting our modern versions, and still greater benefits are to be realized. In this connection we might refer to other manuscripts, but space forbids. Codex Bezai, however, should be looked up. It is unique in this, that the Old Latin and Greek writings are on opposite pages: the Greek on the left hand, the Latin on the right. It is quite an old document and has been tampered with. There

are signs of words having been written into the text that do not belong there. Besides strange corrections and erasures are in it, not supported by other texts.

That any of these that we have studied should remain is the marvel of history. But here they are, and just at a time when all the world with new zeal and devotion is endeavoring to know more of the Bible and its history.

The Past Speaks

So the distant past still lives in these ancient, dust-covered, mutilated, yet precious documents. They speak to us of battles fought and won, of affliction too great to describe, of successes that have never been equaled. But above all they throb with the emotion and faith of the saints that made the church famous in the past and help to quicken its life in the present. They are eloquent in testimony and declare "that God's word never returns to him void; but accomplishes that for which it was sent."

Study Topics

1. Of the two kinds of manuscripts, uncial and cursive, which are the older? Which are more easily written?
2. For what reason are the older manuscripts more valuable? Explain.
3. Do the sayings of Jesus found on papyri seem to be like his words in the Gospels? Are fragments of papyri valuable?
4. Why are papyrus manuscripts less complete than those on parchment or vellum?
5. What do you understand a palimpsest manuscript to

be? Tell the story of Codex Ephraem, which is described in this chapter.

6. Prepare a review of the Sinaitic Manuscript, and how it was found.
7. What is a facsimile of a manuscript? Is it of any service? Did you ever see a facsimile copy of the Declaration of Independence?

For Further Study

Severn's *Makers of the Bible*, pages 83–89.
Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, on MSS. and Versions.
Stock's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 58–72.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 11–29.

CHAPTER XXVI

EARLY ENGLISH VERSIONS

THE British Isles are the seat of a great and beneficent empire, with a history many centuries long and territorial possessions comprising continents. No country is more Christian at heart, which can be explained by its devotion to the Bible and the church. To it we are greatly in debt, for it has given us our Bible in the English language and has made it the dominant factor in our laws, arts, and literature.

How this came about we will discuss here. Though many facts and events in this great achievement are hidden in obscurity and can only be conjectured, we know enough to appreciate how wonderful was the influence of the Bible in England from the first. England, and the rest of the English-speaking world, cannot be accounted for apart from the Bible.

ENGLISH TRADITIONS

Though so far removed from Palestine, where Christianity had its rise, Britain was not neglected by Christian missionaries. They visited its shores in the early centuries and made history when its native population was emerging from the darkness of superstition and paganism.

Early missionary tales.—There are many things we would like to know about this great country,

but the distant past refuses to divulge them. However, many traditions have come to us. One of them is that the British Isles were visited by Joseph of Arimathæa, and that he encouraged missions there. Still others maintain that Peter and Paul had been to Britain and left there the impress of their devotion. Tertullian, a great lawyer and Christian scholar of the third century, states that many places in this new country were Christian. Origen, in 253 A. D., witnesses to the power of Christ on the islands and concludes that before 200 A. D. Christianity had gained a foothold, and by 300 A. D. had a church organization presided over by bishops. This testimony is strengthened by the fact that bishops represented the islands in a Church Council at Arles as early as 314 A. D.

Now, this is significant, for, as we have already seen, the church never goes anywhere without the Scriptures. Therefore, the inevitable happened: some of the great versions of the Bible which we have described before, got to England. Notably this was true of the *Old Latin translations and the Vulgate*. Many of the native provinces were influenced by them, and no one more than the Celts (Welsh), who early in the church became its great singers and from whom came some of its great missionaries and evangelists. This was true elsewhere on the islands, where very early churches, monasteries, and schools were established.

A dark day.—With the Anglo-Saxon invasion early in the fifth century (410) this promising civilization was all but destroyed. For nearly a century and a quarter there were incessant conflicts, which proved disastrous to the natives, who were either

enslaved or driven elsewhere. They were under the heel of the conquerors and subjected to their pagan laws and customs. Their rule of iron, however, could not wipe out Christianity, as we will see.

Ireland the island of light.—While the Anglo-Saxon invaders had almost destroyed the ancient British church, that in Ireland was spared. There, under Saint Patrick, a young and hopeful church came into existence and this, fortunately for Britain, kept the Christian fires burning among the Celts and the Scots, so that ultimately the whole country was swept by its holy flames.

At this time Ireland was called an island of saints, because students and scholars of the war-harassed continent repaired there for safety, meditation, study, and prayer. Here was founded a university at Armagh, which proved a great factor in the life of the people and was known as the University of the West. In it men were trained for leadership in the church, and from it missionaries proceeded into Scotland, Northumbria, Jarrow-on-the-Tyne, Whitby in Yorkshire, and Bangor in Wales. So the people were unconsciously prepared for the next step.

Later missionaries.—When Gregory became Pope at Rome, he sent Augustine with forty missionaries to Britain. When this force arrived there they found things ready for them. Before their campaign of unselfish service had spent itself, the warlike Anglo-Saxons found Christianity too powerful to resist. Consequently, conversions followed in large number, many were baptized, and the Christian Church began again to make history in Britain.

However, the people had no Bible in their own

tongue. The oppressive measures of the Saxons, as we saw before, would not permit it. Besides, few people could have read the Scriptures even had they been available. But with the cross of Christ once more planted on the island, the Scriptures could not be withheld from the people, and it was not very long afterward when the Book's light shone forth.

The Pioneers of the English Bible

Pioneer days are always full of romantic episodes and experiences. Indeed, two or three chapters could be devoted to these early English pioneers, who labored courageously and alone to give the Bible to the people; but we will confine our thought to that many paragraphs only.

Caedmon.—The story of this simple-minded shepherd, who lived in the seventh century, and became a monk and poet, will never wax old. Lovers of the Bible will always insist on telling it, if for no other reason than this, it illustrates how God finds his workers and does his work.

The experience that changed Caedmon's career occurred in the stable of the famous Abbey of Whitby, to which, after an evening of festivity and entertainment, he had repaired for the night. He was greatly distressed that he lacked talent of any kind with which to honor the Lord. That very night at the feast he had been asked to make some contribution to the program, but could not so much as sing one song. Disappointed with himself he retired and fell asleep. In his sleep he dreamed that a stranger had appeared from heaven and bade him sing. To this request he offered

excuse; but the stranger would not be refused. By the next time the stranger spoke the stable was filled with a marvelous light, but his request was the same. Addressing Caedmon again, he said: "Now, we ought always to praise the Lord of heaven for his mighty works. Rise, Caedmon, and sing."

It is a strange story, but the result is not. Under the tender and sympathetic encouragement of Hilda, the abbess, to whom he told his dream, and who read to him from the Scriptures and explained them, he became the first great religious poet of England. "His song," so says Bede, "was of the creation of the world, of the birth of man, of the history of Genesis. He sang too the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and their entrance into the promised land, and many other narratives of Holy Scripture. Of the incarnation also did he sing, and of the passion; of the resurrection and ascension into heaven; of the coming of the Holy Spirit; and the teaching of the apostles." Long before the people had the Scriptures in their own tongue, he taught them how to sing its great truths and stories. The rimes, lyrics, and paraphrases of this humble man are the first step toward our securing the Bible in the English tongue.

Gospels that would not sink or burn.—There are many thrilling pages in the history of the Bible's coming to us. None is more interesting than that which deals with Eadfrith's Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels. This was made shortly after Caedmon's death at Lindisfarne, and contained Jerome's Latin translation of the Gospels, to which were added Anglo-Saxon interlineations or glosses. During the Danish invasion the old monastery in which

this manuscript reposed, was plundered; but fortunately for the manuscript monks escaped with it. In their effort to reach Ireland, however, it fell into the sea and their sorrow was great. Some days later it was washed on the shore and found. For several centuries it was kept at Durham in the collection of Sir R. Cotton. In 1731, nearly a thousand years later, a fire destroyed many manuscripts in this collection, but again this was spared. It is the most beautiful extant specimen of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and is now in the British Museum.

Eadhelm's psalter.—Here also is a unique work. It is by Eadhelm, at first Abbot of Malmesburg and later Bishop of Sherborne, and appeared at about the beginning of the eighth century. It was brought to the people by Eadhelm through preaching and minstrelsy. He dressed as a minstrel and stationed himself at points of vantage and sang the word into the hearts of the people. King Alfred says of him, "Eadhelm won men to heed sacred things by taking stand as a gleeman and singing songs on a bridge." He supplied the Psalms in Anglo-Saxon.

Bede's Gospel of John.—The story of this venerable and learned monk of Jarrow-on-the-Tyne is common property. Surrounded by his faithful secretaries and students he finished this translation on Ascension Day, May 26, 735. Cuthbert, one of his disciples, writes that Bede was in a feeble condition as he completed the work, and that after speaking words of farewell he died with the *Gloria Patri* on his lips. Coming from so learned and truly great man, this Anglo-Saxon version of John had wide acceptance.

King Alfred's Dooms.—(849–901.) The next translation of note is from no less a person than the king, who was eager that his subjects be familiar with the Scriptures. The portions he translated were from Exodus, the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, and favorite passages from the Gospels. By this sovereign act the king opened the way for the creation of a Christian literature among his people. He himself could recite Saxon books and poems. but above all cherished and repeated the Psalms. His work in translation was appreciated by the people, who recognized his greatness and goodness. Green, in his *History of the English People*, calls him "the noblest of English rulers, one of the world's greatest men." How the Ten Commandments appeared in this translation, the following will show. We begin with the fifth commandment:

> **"Ava thinun faeder and thiure meder tha the Drihten sealde the, that thu sy thy leng libende on earthan.**
>
> **"Ne slea thu.**
>
> **"Ne stala thu.**
>
> **"Ne lige thu deamenga.**
>
> **"Ne saege thu lease gewitnesse with thinum nehstan."**

Aelfric's Anglo-Saxon Bible.—(955–1020.) Aelfric's is the last great name before the Norman conquest that is associated with the translation of the Bible. He made Anglo-Saxon versions of a considerable part of the Old Testament, notably the Pentateuch, the historical books, and several Apocryphal writings. A beautiful copy is in the

Cottonian Library, which shows the high class of workmanship that characterized its preparation. It is a pictorial manuscript and in excellent state of preservation.

What Has Been Gained

Thus we have cone to the close of the first period in the translation of the Bible in the English language. Ten centuries have come and gone in Britain, and its people have suffered from the ill effects of war and invasion, but one thing has become theirs that will never be wrested from them—the Bible. This is cherished in their schools, monasteries, and churches in the Latin tongue. Portions of it they have in the Anglo-Saxon, in the form of rimes, paraphrases, hymns, chants, and translations. Much of this work was poorly done, but sufficed to stimulate a keen interest *in* and love *for* the Scriptures. Some of it represented superior scholarship and was accepted as such. All alike prepared the way for a new era of Christian achievement.

But as yet there is no complete translation of the Bible in the language of the people. That work remained for a later century to do. The work had to be done, for already in the valleys and hills of Wales, in the forests of the Scots, and in the lowlands of the Britains the Scriptures were sung and carried from hamlet to hamlet on the wings of the wind. How this greater work was done we shall see next.

Study Topics

1. How early in English History did Christianity become a factor in the life of the people? How was this made possible?

2. Recall the traditions concerning early missionary endeavors in Britain. What version, if any, did the missionaries bring with them?
3. Look up either in Green's *History of the English People*, or in an encyclopædia, the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain.
4. Through what missionary efforts were the Anglo-Saxons converted to Christianity?
5. Recall the stories of Caedmon and Eadfrith.
6. Bring a review of Bede's translation of the Gospel of John.
7. What are the net results of the translations made thus far?
8. In these early days Ireland held a unique position in the extension of Christianity. How do you account for this?

For Further Study

Hunting's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 308–316.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 42–56.
Stock's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 73–84.
Mutch's *History of the Bible*, pages 26–31.
Penniman's *A Book About the English Bible*, pages 323–343.

A PAGE OF WYCLIF'S BIBLE
Note artistic marginal decorations. See Chapter XXVII.

CHAPTER XXVII

WYCLIF'S VERSION

After the pioneer days described in the previous chapter occurred the Norman invasion. This took place in 1066, and for nearly three hundred years French was the language of the upper classes, and Anglo-Saxon translations of the Bible came to a pause. The invaders left nothing undone to establish their rule in both church and state: in the former it displaced Anglo-Saxon priests and bishops by others imported from Normandy, and in the latter its princes and military leaders held the reins of government. Contempt was shown for the Anglo-Saxon language and its literature was discouraged.

The result was damaging to the interests of the common people, and their instruction in religion was neglected. Several centuries passed before they received the attention which they deserved. The Norman clergy had no real interest in the masses, from whom they withheld the strength and comfort of God's Word. The flow of its spiritual fountains was stopped.

But the good seed sown in the previous eight or nine centuries could not be deprived entirely of its harvest. The people had become familiar with the Scriptures through the efforts of Caedmon, Eadhelm and Bede, and they would not be denied them. They would have the Bible, and, as we shall see, a condition arose which made it necessary to supply it.

Conditions of Life

Great events are always caused. Before they happen things have gone on before. The more we study history the clearer this becomes. "Effects have their causes" is axiomatic not merely in the realm of the exact sciences—it is true also in religion. If we will remember this, it will help us greatly to appreciate the next great achievement which gave us the whole Bible in the English language. What conditions, then, necessitated it?

Worldliness of the church.—The church was worldly. That is to say, it was more concerned about strengthening its organization, enriching its priests and bishops, than securing the salvation of man and the uplift of society. The best parishes were farmed out for a consideration, and this could not be done without imposing upon the people. Everything was taxed and tithed, so that to many folk it seemed that not even salvation was free. To add to the seriousness of the situation, many of the priests were ignorant and their preaching lacked spiritual power. Then, too, the church was scandalized by the spectacle of having two Popes, each condemning the other with a vehemence shocking to sensitive souls.

National spirit.—A new spirit of patriotism was making itself felt. A greater and mightier England was the dream of many of its best men and women. But if this was to be realized, it was necessary for the country to disentangle itself from the papal coils that bound its life. Not only the people but the government itself was under tribute to Rome. Thus church and state needed emancipation, and, to their credit it must be said, they broke the

shackles of bondage. Both alike knew, however, that if England was to remain free, the religious life of the people must be maintained. Furthermore, it was seen that they must have their own literature. Fortunately, this was being created for them by Chaucer, Langland, Wyclif and others, through whose influence the English language gradually displaced the French, so that by 1339 it was the language of the schools, and by 1362 the tongue used to plead cases in courts of justice.

The people shall have the Bible.—There are times when human desires which have been checked and restrained will break forth like a dam that has forced its walls. This happened after the fearful plague, known as the Black Death, in which England's population was almost cut in half (1347–1349). In those days of desolation and fearful gloom the people needed God and the consolation of the Scriptures. In those anxious, troublous days a boy was growing into young manhood who was destined to be another Moses to lead his people into a larger and better life.

John Wyclif, the Man

In an earlier century one of our great American preachers coined a sentence all of us should ponder. "Man," said he, "never makes half a pair of shears; neither does God make half a providence." Applying such an observation to the condition described above, we can be quite sure that God was not unconcerned, but preparing the way for a better state of affairs. This proved to be so, for when he was needed, just when he was needed, John Wyclif stepped on the stage.

His birth and training.—Wyclif was born near Richmond, in Yorkshire, in 1324. Of his boyhood days we know little other than the fact that he was able to enter Oxford University at the age of sixteen. There he distinguished himself as a student and later became one of its most brilliant scholars. From the first he was a friend of the people and pitied their wretchedness. This is shown by the fact that as early as 1356 he wrote a tract in which he took cognizance of the Black Plague and its discouraging effect on the people. Indeed, through his whole life he was their friend and, like his Lord, carried their burdens on his heart.

His preaching.—Wyclif loved the Scriptures and made them his passion. In the lecture room and the pulpit, in parish visitation and on the public forum he used them with convincing directness and power. Unlike others, to whom religion had become formal and lifeless, he made them a living, vibrant, and beautiful power in life. In his preaching he had the people and their needs in mind, and they, therefore, understood him. They heard him gladly, because he made the Old Book live again. He applied its teachings to the practical problems of the day, and gave comfort and counsel where they were needed. Neither did he withhold condemnation where the occasion required it. Therefore he denounced corruptions in the church and worldliness without, and with indomitable courage demanded reforms. In eloquence he was another John the Baptist, in learning another Saint Paul, and in loving sympathy another John the Beloved. He was a bright and shining light, and has justly been called "The Morning Star of the Reformation."

His great work.—Beyond question his great work was translating the Bible into the English language. He could not fail to do this; indeed, the whole trend of his life was such that he had to do it. Long before he began the task of translation he had organized bands of "poor priests" to spread the good news of the Kingdom. He did this because, as he himself said, "The Sacred Scriptures are the property of the people and no one should be allowed to wrest them from them." Therefore, to aid his "poor priests," also called Lollards, he set about providing them with the Bible in their own tongue. He began with the New Testament, probably with the book of Revelation, and then its remaining books, and issued the completed version in 1380. Assisted by Nicolas de Hereford, he proceeded to the Old Testament, and by the summer of 1382 the whole Bible was in the hands of the people. Thus the Vulgate of Jerome, for it was his version Wyclif used, was translated into English, which since then has all but become the universal language.

The English of Wyclif's version.—Wyclif's translation was a national event and did more than anything else to determine the thought and create the literature of the English people. In style and diction it represents the finest specimens of the English spoken in the fourteenth century and reflects the genius and thought of the plain people. Therefore it is characterized by quaint and homely expressions, but is not on that account devoid of grace, charm, and dignity. Its striking phrases stick and are perpetuated in our own Bible. However, if a copy of Wyclif's Bible could be in our hands, we would be quite perplexed at its spelling,

for our own is simpler. The sound of the words would be more intelligible, as the following selections from the Beatitudes show:

> **"Blessid be pore men in spirit: for the kyngdom of hevens is hern.**
>
> **"Blessid be mylde men; for thei schulen weeld the erthe.**
>
> **"Blessid be thei that moornen: for thei schulen be comfortide.**
>
> . . . . . .
>
> **"Blessid be pesible men: for thei schulen be clepid goddis children."**

How it was received.—You will recall the paintul experiences of Saint Jerome when he translated the Vulgate, which was received with suspicion and abuse. Wyclif fared no better; but that is not the whole story, as we will see.

1. *His Bible had a large circulation.* Persons who were skilled copyists came forward to make new copies, so that in a short time many volumes had been made available. This was the only way to proceed, for printing had not yet been invented. In promoting the circulation the "poor priests" were of great service. Through their leadership Bible reading circles were encouraged, and many a house that was fortunate enough to shelter a copy, became a place of Christian fellowship and Bible study. Great sums were required to secure copies, and it is known that as much as two hundred and fifty dollars was paid. Others paid admission to homes where reading circles met, in order that they might find refreshing in "the honeyed wisdom of God's Word."

2. *It provoked hostility.* This was to be expected. The Vulgate, that is, the Latin translation of Jerome, had been held in supreme veneration for more than a thousand years, and Popes, bishops, abbots, and schoolmen loved it. Consequently, Wyclif's translation, though it supplied a real need, was regarded as an act of sacrilege, worthy of condemnation and punishment. The clergy felt that Wyclif made the Bible common, and that the "Gospel pearl should not be cast before swine to be trodden under foot."

But Wyclif's enemies did not stop with abuse. They proceeded against him in both church and state courts. A convocation of bishops in 1408 decreed it as heresy to read the Bible in English, and punishable by excommunication. Severe penalties were imposed, including fines and imprisonment. At one time a bill was presented in the House of Lords forbidding the reading of the Bible by the common people, but through the valiant support of John of Gaunt, Wyclif's staunch friend, it was not passed. While Wyclif was thoroughly hated by the clergy, and excommunicated for his teaching, he was allowed to minister to his little parish at Lutterworth, where, in 1384, he died. Nearly half a century later, by the decree passed at the Council of Constance, when persecution was in progress, his bones were dug up and burned, and the ashes cast into the river Swift. Thomas Fuller's quaint words tell the tale. "They cast his ashes into the brook, which conveyed them into the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean; and thus his ashes were the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all over the world."

So Began a New Day

At such cost has our Bible come to us. Such was the price that had to be paid before it became the glad possession of our ancestors. But Wyclif's work was not in vain. For more than a century and a quarter it held its own and became the foundation of English literature. Finally it got into the homes of the humble and into the hearts of the faithful. Rich and poor read it, and the time came when bishops and priests preached it. Revised copies were made of it, but its homely style and quaint translations were never lost. Even in our own Bible are the unmistakable evidences of its existence, and the time will never come when we shall be ungrateful to this valiant saint for his unselfish service.

Study Topics

1. Has the Bible ever been a lost book? Was it ever a lost book to the people of England? If so, explain.
2. Why should the clergy and the bishops of the church ever have felt that it was unwise to place the Bible into the hands of the people?
3. What conditions required the translation of the Bible in the English language?
4. Prepare a review of Wyclif's life.
5. What effect did Wyclif's translation have upon English literature? (See Taine's work on *The History of English Literature*.)
6. Recall Saint Jerome's experiences. In what respect were Wyclif's experiences like his?
7. How were books made in Wyclif's day? Was it expensive? What are you willing to pay for a Bible to-day? Is it worth it?

For Further Study

Mutch's *The History of the Bible*, pages 26–29.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 57–79.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 183ff.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 77–84.
Penniman's *A Book About the English Bible*, pages 336–343.
Hunting's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 308–314.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING AND THE ART OF PRINTING

We have seen how Wyclif's Bible was received and how large an influence it wielded. Copies of it were multiplied and revisions made. The most notable copy is that by Richard Purvey, Wyclif's friend and curate, who completed it in 1388. This manuscript is in Trinity College, Dublin. For more than one hundred years Wyclif's Bible held the center of the field, comforted the people, influenced their speech, and determined not merely their conduct but their literature. No other version was made until Tyndale's translation appeared (1525–1535), but in the interval great things happened which affected the history of the entire world.

The Revival of Greek Literature

Several times it has been observed in this book that Latin was the language the scholars used. Their books on philosophy, science, history, and religion were in this tongue, and it had come to this eminent position largely through Saint Jerome's Latin version of the Bible. But nearly a thousand years after its appearance occurred an event that brought a competitor in the field, namely, the Greek language and its literature. How this happened constitutes an interesting and illuminating chapter in history.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453.—The fall of Constantinople, before the increasing power of the Turk in 1453, was a terrible blow to the church. But it proved to be a calamity which was really a blessing in disguise. Though Constantinople was made the capital of the Turks, though the crescent supplanted the cross, and Saint Sophia was turned into a mosque, the great body of Greek literature which the Eastern Church had jealously guarded, was released to the West. The Eastern Empire, so long a valiant champion of Christianity, passed away, but its spirit and literature remained to further quicken the life of Christendom.

Greek scholars move westward.—This came about through the fact that the great leaders of the Eastern Church, finding it impossible to continue their work under the Sultan, who made their life intolerable, moved westward into Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and England. They took with them not merely their great learning and traditions, but many Greek manuscripts of the Bible, and some very notable documents of the New Testament. They brought also the works of Thucydides and Plato, Homer and Sophocles, and many other works that college men and women study to this day.

The results of this exodus are incalculable. Among them may be noted the fact that students of the Bible now had access to it in Greek and were able to compare its contents and text with the Latin Vulgate. New interest was awakened in biblical study and everywhere scholars felt that with the fall of Constantinople "Greece rose from the grave with the New Testament in her hand."

Greek study the vogue.—In a short time the study of Greek became fashionable. It was the thing to do, and no one was considered truly educated without a knowledge of it. Students became so infatuated with this new interest that had come into life that they took Greek names for their own. For instance, a great German teacher by the name of Schwarzerd, meaning "black earth," took the Greek name of Melanchthon, which means the same thing. Likewise "Erasmus" became the substitute for "Gerbard," a Dutch name meaning "beloved." All this proved beneficial to the study and spread of the Scriptures, as we shall see, for dictionaries and grammars, versions and commentaries, were multiplied. A Greek Grammar was ready in 1476, a Greek Lexicon 1480, and by 1516 Erasmus issued a New Testament in the original Greek. All the great universities in England, France, Spain, and Italy encouraged students in this new study, so that in a short time the church's leaders and prospective leaders were studying the Gospels and the Epistles in the very tongue they were written, and this, as we shall see, had much to do with the next great translation of the Bible into English.

This, then, was a wonderful age, and its achievements cannot be overestimated. James Russell Lowell says of it, "It was a time when every breeze was dusty with the golden pollen of Greece, Rome, and Italy."

The Invention of Printing

In this period occurred also other events that left their impress upon the times and prepared

A GUTENBERG PRESS

humanity for progress along many lines. Among inventions, for instance, were gunpowder and firearms, the mariner's compass and printing by movable types. There was kindled a deep interest in art, including architecture, sculpture, painting and music. It was also a time of maritime exploration and discovery, in which new sea routes were determined and America was discovered. But the event which means most to our study was the invention of printing by which the Bible was made the book of the people.

Gutenberg's printing press.—To John Gutenberg belongs the distinction of inventing the first printing press. That books could be printed probably occurred to him in his boyhood days, when he used to cut his name on trees and made out of wood the letters of his name. There is a tradition that one day when he had done the latter, one of his wooden letters fell in a pot of dye, from which he snatched it and accidentally let it drop on a piece of parchment, on which, of course, was left its impress. Probably he never forgot that day's experience. At all events, we know that thirty years later it was he who had invented the printing press, making him and the town of Mayence, where he lived, famous. The printing press was a reality and everybody was astonished. Some people felt that he and his associate, a man by the name of Fust, were in league with the devil. However, in a few years printing presses had multiplied and were to be found in the leading cities of Germany, France, and England.

The first book printed.—It is interesting to observe that the first book printed was the Vulgate,

the great Latin version of Saint Jerome. Almost immediately people recognized that the press was a great labor-saving device and that it had come to stay. In this they were right, for this simple invention had become the forerunner of our great modern presses, which are run by electricity and steam and multiply books by the thousands every hour.

Needless to state, England took kindly to the invention, where a press had been installed in Westminster Abbey and was long in use. William Caxton was the first to operate it, and became the pioneer in a long line of English publishers. One of the first books he published was *The Golden Legend*, translated from the Latin by Jacobus de Voragine, a collection of stories about saints, martyrs, and ecclesiastics. To it he appended Bible stories, which were the first portions of the Scriptures printed. This was in 1483. By the end of the century more than one hundred editions of the Vulgate had been published.

Other books.—Many other works appeared in course of time. Such zeal and enthusiasm characterized the times that editions of the Old Testament in Hebrew were printed for use in the Jewish synagogues. The Greek Psalter appeared at Venice in 1486. The success of these was so great that Cardinal Ximenez ordered a huge volume, which included the Hebrew Old Testament, The Septuagint Old Testament, The Greek New Testament and the Latin Vulgate, and this appeared in 1522.

By this time, of course, it became quite evident that the time was not far distant when the Bible would be published in English and its sacred pages

available at every fireside. Great champions of the people were rising on every side, and before the translation by Tyndale appeared, there were a sufficient number of English books to inspire courage to print the Bible. One of them was Erasmus, who said: "I desire that even the weakest woman should read the Gospels, and the Epistles of Paul. I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plow; that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle; that the traveler should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey." To help to this end, Luther had given the Bible to the Germans in their own tongue, and in like manner versions appeared in France, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Holland, and Italy. Thus the printing press proved to be a great miracle worker by whose great power the Word of God was made available in almost every place.

The Reformation

This was the third great event in the interval between Wyclif's Bible and that by William Tyndale, which was published in 1525. It was a time of protest against the evils of the times, the abuses of the church, the degradation of spiritual things, the corruption of the clergy. Repeatedly in our study we have seen how persons in office and leadership failed in their high position to be the genuine and sympathetic friends of the poor and needy. Even the monks and "preaching friars," who for a long time ministered to the needy, had become corrupt and were held in contempt. Reforms in the church were necessary. The times

called for protests, and these were made, and so began the great Protestant Church, with which we are identified.

Now, this great movement was supported in the main by a return to the Scriptures. People drank "new youth and life again" from its unfailing springs. The people took heart again in a thousand places, and more than ever challenged its leaders for the "Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, unto all who believe."

The Dawn

In all these events we can see the dawn of a greater and fairer day. Wyclif was called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," and rightly so; but now the dawn itself is at hand, and we are facing the golden light of another day in which, before it pass, unspeakable wonders will be wrought and achieved. God is marching on and the best lies just ahead.

Study Topics

1. How long an interval followed between Wyclif and Tyndale? Recall the great events of the period.
2. Give an account of the fall of Constantinople and the consequences that followed.
3. Why should Christian people be interested in Greek and Greek literature? In what language was the New Testament written?
4. Give the story of John Gutenberg. (Consult an encyclopædia.)
5. Why should the printing press be hailed with such delight? What kind of books were first published?
6. What do you mean by the Reformation? What occasioned it? Who were its great leaders?

7. What does the following observation mean, "Wyclif was the Morning Star of the Reformation"?

For Further Study

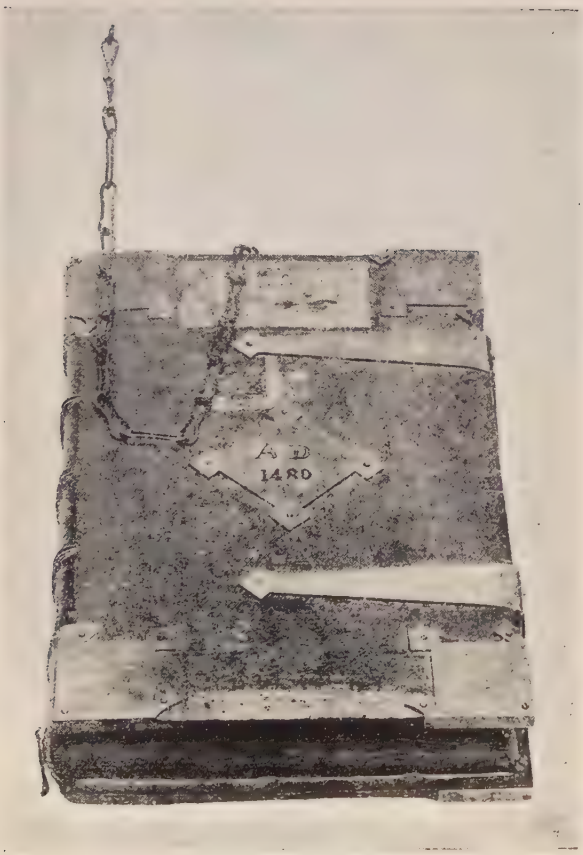
Stock's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 85–98.
Encyclopædia Britannica on Printing and Reformation.
Lewis' *How the Bible Grew*, pages 186ff.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 80–86.

CHAPTER XXIX

VERSIONS BY TYNDALE AND OTHERS

THE achievements of a great soul are always inspiring. They make us sit up and take notice: they challenge us to our best. They make us impatient with trifling and stimulate to tasks worthy of ourselves and God. Such were the achievements of William Tyndale, who is the next person in the long line of noble souls that gave us the Bible in our own tongue.

As we have already partly anticipated, Tyndale came upon the stage just when great men were needed to guide the people through the troublous times in which they lived. Forces and influences were in the air that were preparing the English people for the Reformation, which had already begun in Bohemia, in the Swiss Alps, and in Germany. Among these forces was the preaching of the reformers, who desired the church to be cleansed from self-seeking, avarice, and corruption, and hoped for a ministry that would relieve the spiritual destitution of many thousands of the poor who lived without Christian care for body and soul. Worldliness was in the church and the salt of its ministry had lost its savor. Everywhere was intense longing after spiritual food that would satisfy, the same that Jesus gave the people of his day when he stood up and said,



CHAINED BIBLE. A. D. 1480
Bible Museum, Congregational Library,
Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

> **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**

Rich and poor, wise and ignorant, needed the beautiful, glorious, and transfiguring gospel of Jesus Christ.

Tyndale the Man of the Hour

The man who was raised up for a time so momentous to England was William Tyndale, of whom it may be said as of his Lord, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." However, as we will see, he did his work and its beneficent results abide with us still.

His youth and training.—There is uncertainty about the facts of his early life, but we know that he was born in 1483 at Slymbridge in Gloucestershire, grew up in wholesome surroundings, studied at both Oxford and Cambridge, and distinguished himself in the languages. In these institutions he was brought under the influence of Grocyn and Erasmus, who were great Greek scholars, and had much to do with the course of his life. From these men he caught their passion for the New Learning, which had taken so many by storm, and especially their devotion to the Scriptures, which were now being studied in their original languages.

His great vow.—Tyndale was a great debater and knew how to worst a foe. So we are not surprised that in the year 1521, when a chaplain and tutor in Little Sodbury, while in a controversy with

another, in the heat and fervor of the intellectual combat he suddenly made a resolution that governed his whole after life. He said in answer to the argument that it was not wise to place the law of God in the hands of the people, "If God spare me, I will one day make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of Scripture than the Pope does." Such was his vow and he made it good.

Undertaking the work.—A man of such high spirit and intense purpose could not be at ease. Therefore we learn that he went to London in 1523, seeking the support and blessing of Tunstall, the bishop of that city. No doubt he had in mind the decree of 1408 that forbade any person to translate the Bible without special permission. The days of Wyclif had not been forgotten, and many bishops and princes were against the Bible being translated into the "Vulger English Tongue." From Bishop Tunstall, though he waited a year for his aid, he got no encouragement; and he left the city with the conviction, as he himself wrote, "Not only was there no room in my Lord of London's Palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England."

Works in exile.—Financially assisted by Humphrey Monmouth and other good men, he departed to Germany. This was in May, 1524, when after a short stay at Hamburg he visited Martin Luther at Wittenberg. Under the inspiration of Luther he proceeded to Cologne, and by 1525 he completed his translation of the New Testament. In making it he used the Greek Testament of Erasmus, the Vulgate by Jerome, and Luther's lately published Bible in German.

However, keen disappointment was to be his: for he had been betrayed by a priest named John Cochlaus to King Henry of England and Cardinal Wolsey, and this work, which was in the printer's hands, came to a serious pass. Tyndale just had time to secure the sheets already printed and carried them off to Worms. Shortly after, three thousand copies of the first printed New Testament were issued and provision was made to forward the same to England, where they were eagerly welcomed. Then he proceeded to the translation of the Old Testament, which, however, through his ill-fated death he did not complete. In this latter work he made his translation from the Hebrew and ignored the Septuagint and the Vulgate.

How the books were circulated.—To print the books was one thing; to circulate them was another. Serious obstacles had to be overcome. Among them was the hostility of the authorities of the church, which condemned his New Testament in 1526 and again in 1530. King Henry and Cardinal Wolsey ordered all copies to be seized and burned. Furthermore, ports of entry were carefully watched so that it became difficult for copies to get into England. The Bishop of London even went to the expedient of buying up all the copies as they were published, but even this did not suffice. There were people in England who wanted the Bible, and though it was dangerous to possess a volume, many were secured. The translator and his work could not be defeated, which is proved by the fact that more than forty editions of Tyndale's New Testament were printed between 1525 and 1566.

His martyrdom.—Betrayed at last by a villain

whom he had befriended, Tyndale was seized and put into a dungeon in the Castle of Vilvorden, near Brussels. While in prison efforts were made to have him return to England, but he felt that his friends, and not even the king, were able to protect him from the bishops, "who never kept faith with heretics." He suffered greatly in prison, for he was denied all comforts, and treated little better than a knave. He finally suffered martyrdom at the stake on Friday, October 6, 1536. His last words were of England, for which his heart never grew cold, and for the king. "Lord, open the king of England's eyes," was the prayer that sealed his lips and ended his work.

His translation epoch-making.—Tyndale's translation made history. Because of its Anglo-Saxon simplicity, ease and beauty of movement, balanced sentences, and even quaint renderings, it was recognized shortly after its appearance that it had come to stay. A few specimens of its quaint renderings will be of interest:

> **"Brought oxen and garlands to the churche porche."—Acts 14: 13.**
>
> **"When ye pray, bable not moche."—Matthew 6: 7.**
>
> **"He sent forthe the hangman."—Mark 6: 27.**
>
> **"And the Lorde was with Joseph, and he was a luckee fellowe."—Genesis 29: 2.**
>
> **"Which for one breakfast sold his birthright."—Hebrews 12: 16.**

Tyndale's version showed the possibilities and genius of the rapidly growing English tongue, for

it was, according to one scholar, nearly ninety-seven per cent Anglo-Saxon in its use and choice of words. Because of this fact, it was from the first dear to the people and could not with comfort be neglected by the priests and bishops. Other versions soon followed, but everyone did homage to the martyr and his work.

The Martyr's Triumph

That Tyndale had done a great and good work soon became evident in the number of new translations that were made. Both church and state, the king and his court, the bishops and their followers, recognized that something had to be done; and it was not very long after Tyndale's death that versions were prepared with their consent and blessing. Some of the versions made are as follows:

Coverdale's Bible.—Within a year of the martyr's death, public opinion had changed to the extent that King Henry permitted the publication of the English Bible. The first complete printed Bible in English to have this distinction was that by Miles Coverdale, who used and improved Tyndale's version. It appeared in 1535 and was dedicated to Henry VIII. In style it was in some respects an improvement over Tyndale, and "had marked qualities of melody, rhythm, directness, and charm." The Twenty-third Psalm is a fine example of Coverdale's style. It is as follows:

> **"The Lorde is my shepherde, I can want nothing.**
> **He fedeth me in a greene pasture and ledeth me to a fresh water.**
> **He quickeneth my soule and bringeth me forth in the waye of righteousness for his names sake.**

Though I shulde walke now in the valley of the shadowe of death yet I feare no evell for thou art with me, thy staffe and thy shepehoke comforte me.

Thou preparest a table before me agaynst mine enemies.

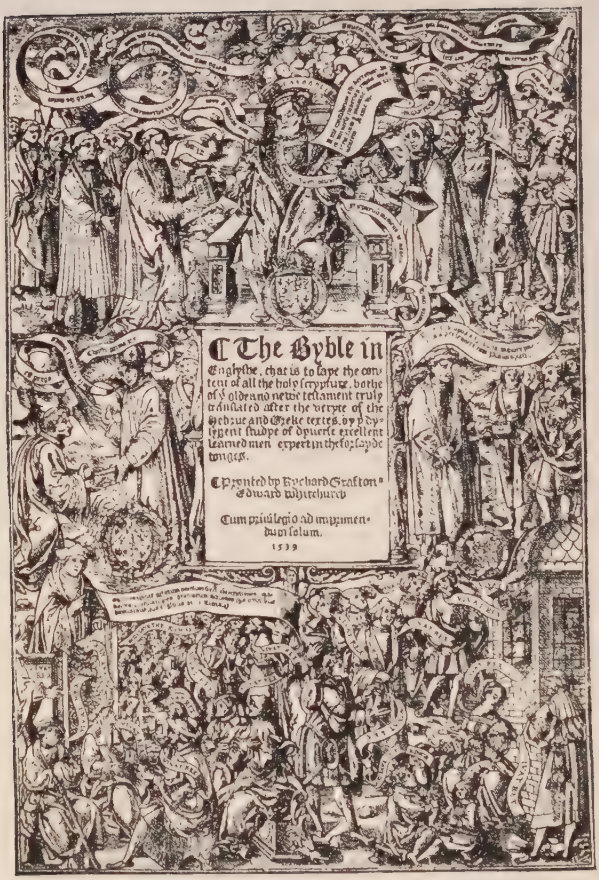
Thou anoyntest my heade with oyle and fyllest my cuppe full.

Oh let they loving-kyndnes and mercy followe me all the days off my lyfe that I maye dwell in the house off the Lord for ever."

To this day Coverdale's translation maintains its place in the English Book of Common Prayer. Because of its unusual translation of Jeremiah 8: 22, which reads there is a "balm in Gilead" and he made to read "treacle in Galaad," it is sometimes referred to as "The Treacle Bible."

"Matthew's Bible."—This was edited by John Rogers, who used the name "Matthew" as a pen name to conceal his identity. We do not know where it was printed, but it appeared in 1537, and no doubt was an effort to supply the bishop with a Bible having no connection with the names of Tyndale and Coverdale. Through the efforts of Archbishop Cranmer and Oliver Cromwell this work was received with favor and "set forth with the King's most gracyous lycense." While faithful to the Vulgate, it has the evident marks of the translations of Tyndale and Coverdale. The maker of this Bible was burned at the stake under Queen Mary.

Taverner's Bible.—This was the work of a lawyer, who later took up the ministry, and by 1539 published a folio edition of the Bible, which, however, was little more than a revision of the Cover-



TITLE-PAGE TO THE "GREAT BIBLE," 1539

dale version. It had little influence in later translations and was reprinted only once, in 1549.

The great Bible.—This was produced at the request of Cromwell, who employed Coverdale to make it, using Matthew's Bible as a basis. The printing was to have been done in Paris, but owing to bitter religious conflicts there, it was published in England. In size its pages measured 13¼ x 7½ inches, and for this cause and the added reason of its imposing appearance, was known as the "Great Bible." It appeared in 1539 and was designed to be read in church, where it could be seen chained to lecturns and reading-desks. Its influence was great because it was widely used. Saint Paul's Church, London, had six great Bibles at points of vantage, and about them throngs of people met to hear it read.

The Geneva Bible (1557–1560).—When Mary Tudor ascended to the throne many English Protestants fled from her persecutions to Geneva, which had become a great center of the Reformation. Assisted there by other sympathetic souls, this translation was made and in later years when Elizabeth became the Queen of England, was brought to England bearing a dedication to her Majesty. It became very popular because of its small size, Roman type, and because of its suggestive notes. It is also known as the "Breeches Bible," from its rendering of Genesis 3: 7, which is translated as follows, "Adam and Eve sewed fig-tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches." From the first it was popular and passed through one hundred and sixty editions, "contesting the ground even with our own Authorized Version."

Other Bibles.—Still other editions followed, notably the "Bishop's Bible" in 1568. This is a revision of the Great Bible upon which it was no improvement. Another Version was the "Douai Bible," which was prepared for English Roman Catholics, between 1582–1609. It was made by Catholic refugees at Rheims and based upon the Vulgate, which in 1546 was decreed the authorized version of the church. It won little favor with the Protestants, who recognized the pronounced differences between it and their own translations. However, it was an eminent translation and supplied later revisers with a few very beautiful renderings.

Looking Backward

We have come a great way and can afford to recall the stages of the journey. Between the point at which we have arrived and the days of Caedmon, Eadhelm, and Bede are many long and trying centuries. At first the people had to be satisfied with paraphrases, chants, and hymns. The more fortunate had the Psalms, which were dear to the Celts and the Picts. Then came the invasions of the Danes and the Normans, when much that had been gained was lost; but because the seed had been sown in mellow hearts the future was bound to reap a harvest of greater things. This was insured through the great pioneer souls of Wyclif, Tyndale, and the rest. Through their consecration and self-sacrifice the Bible became the foundation of English life and literature, and the common and glad possession of the masses. Opposition in church and state was overcome and the English Bible came to stay.

Study Topics

1. Have some one report the story of Tyndale's life and work. Indicate in what respects his translation differed from Wyclif's.
2. What reasons can you give for the opposition to the use of the Bible in English?
3. What means were used to give Tyndale's work a circulation?
4. Which version was the first complete English Bible to be printed?
5. Give the story of the "Great Bible," especially indicating the large use made of it.
6. Which of the versions described in this chapter had the greatest popularity?
7. Up to this point indicate the gains that have been made in giving the Bible to the people in their own language.

For Further Study

Penniman's *A Book About the English Bible*, pages 347–365.
Mutch's *The History of Our Bible*, pages 29–32.
Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 80–111.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 99–115.
Articles in *Encyclopædia Britannica* on Tyndale and Coverdale.

CHAPTER XXX

THE AUTHORIZED AND OTHER VERSIONS

We have seen in the previous chapters how, in spite of great obstacles and discouragements, the Bible came to its own in the hands and hearts of the people. The self-sacrificing labors of Coverdale, Tyndale, and Wyclif were reaping a rich harvest, and "English literature blossomed out into almost divine beauty." England was headed for a time when, as Carlyle says, "In the poorest cottage in the land there is one book, wherein the spirit of man has found light and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him." This "one book" was the Bible.

No doubt Queen Elizabeth, who began her reign reverently kissing the Bible, had much to do with this. At all events her act symbolizes what was taking place in English history, for soon after her accession, as Green states in his history, "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." Its influence was reflected everywhere: in the schools and universities, in Parliament and in the church, in its music and literature.

In time, as we indicated in the previous chapter, a number of Bibles were in use, and while some of them were well received, not any one of them was satisfactory in all respects. The Geneva Bible gave offense to some people because of its marginal

notes. The Great Bible was inconvenient and fell out of use. There were inaccuracies in others, so that gradually there was felt the need for a uniform translation for all the people. Of this need King James was made aware, and consequently he ordered a new version to be made.

The Authorized Version

This brings us at length to the precious volume that is in the hands of most of us. On the title and dedicatory pages you will see under what auspices and for what reasons it was prepared. You will observe that all this took place more than three hundred years ago, which helps us to understand its wonderful hold on the people. How it came to be we will now consider.

King James I.—One of the first acts of the king, shortly after his accession to the throne in 1603, was to appoint some of the best-trained men of the times, to the number of fifty-four, to prepare a version based upon the best texts, and with instructions that the New Bible be free of marginal notes and theological prejudice. This was a great order to fill, but not impossible, as history proves. Among those chosen may be mentioned Bancroft, later of Canterbury; Andrews, Dean of Westminster; Overall, Dean of Saint Paul's; Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College; Saville, Provost of Eton; and others of learning and distinction. This was formally done in January, 1604, after a conference held in Hampton Court Palace.

Rules of procedure.—From the first the revisers recognized the magnitude of their work. Therefore they organized themselves carefully for the

sake of efficiency into six groups, each of which was given a portion of the Bible to translate. Each person translated the whole of the portion committed to his group. Then stated meetings were held to compare and criticize what had been done, and each group decided upon the translation that finally should be submitted to the entire body.

Among some of the rules they were requested to follow are these:

(1) The Bishop's Bible was to be the basis of their work.

(2) The translations of Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, and the Great Bible were to be consulted whenever they were found more in accordance with the original.

(3) Old ecclesiastical words were to be kept.

(4) There were to be no marginal notes, except such as were necessary to explain the original Hebrew or Greek words.

(5) They were to maintain throughout the idioms of the English tongue, so admirably reflected in Coverdale and Tyndale.

All told there were fifteen rules, but these will suffice to show their aim and purpose.

Versions used.—While we must remember that the task imposed by the king was not a new translation so much as a revision, the revisers spared no pains to make their work a success. Consequently, in addition to the Bishop's Bible, they used every aid possible. They studied Greek and Hebrew commentaries, Bible in Spanish, Italian, French, and German. Special attention was given the Catholic Version, known as the Douai Bible. "These," says J. Patterson Smyth, "were used;

and when the translators arrived at the exact sense of a passage, no pains were spared to express it in clear, vigorous, idiomatic English." The work was begun in 1607 and finished in 1611, when the new version was published.

Its reception.—We cannot forget the bitter experiences of Wyclif and Tyndale. How, now, was this work that exacted so much study and labor received? Strange to say, its immediate reception was not encouraging. Attacks were made upon the translation and the translators: the latter were accused of deficient scholarship and the former was considered faulty. The Version had to win its way, and it was not in general use until the middle of the century.

The verdict of time.—The very fact that this version has held the admiration of the world for three hundred years speaks volumes. Hardly more needs be said to prove its greatness. Yet it will inspire us to know that it has been called "the first English classic," and in that position it is in no danger of being superseded. Saintsbury speaks of it as "the school and training ground of every man and woman speaking the English tongue." Still another, who was pondering its style, said, "It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells." Words like these, from Protestants and Catholics, could be multiplied, but this will not be necessary, for we too have been touched and moved by its tenderness and simplicity, its majesty and its grandeur. For many of us it will always be the greatest and the most successful literary achievement of man. We will live in the strength of "The Lord is my

Shepherd, I shall not want"; we will sing while summering in the country, "I will look unto the hills, from whence is my help"; and when we are shaken by trouble will be inspired to faith by "Let not your hearts be troubled"; and many a night we will lie down repeating to ourselves, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." A more accurate text of the Bible may come into our hands, but it will never mean more to us than this which has become the world's literary masterpiece.

The Revised Version

There is, of course, another version in the possession of some of us: it is known as the Revised Version, and is comparatively recent. This appeared in 1885. Before this time, however, changes were made here and there in the Authorized Version, as scholarship advanced and new sources became available to them. The desire for a more complete revision came about through discovery, as we shall see.

Old MSS. found.—You will recall that in Chapter XXV we discussed several very old manuscripts. Not one of these was used when the King James version was made. This was due to the fact that all but one of them (Codex Alexandria) had not yet been discovered. When these were found, a new study, known as textual criticism, engaged many biblical scholars. They were interested in these old parchments because they thereby hoped our Bible might be improved and corrected. Then, too, the Authorized Version was made so long ago that some of its words had become obsolete,

and others had changed their meaning. More than two hundred words were thus changed. Other reasons were also advanced, but which we may not consider here.

The revisers.—In 1870, during the reign of Queen Victoria, the revision was decided upon, and a group of scholars, including Scotch, English, and Americans, set to the task. There were thirty-four of them in the Commission, nineteen of whom were for the New Testament and fifteen for the Old.

Eight rules were laid down to guide the work, among which the following are noteworthy: There shall be as few alterations as possible and changes shall be made only when original texts demand it; each company shall go over its work twice and then determine finally what revision shall prevail; changes shall be supported by a "two-thirds vote of those present for final revision. No work was ever undertaken which was more painstaking and thorough, so that we can feel quite sure that from the standpoint of accuracy the Revised Version stands unexcelled.

Its reception.—This work has not been cordially received. To this day it is not in the hands of the masses, but is used mostly by students, scholars, and ministers. Some who have examined it superficially refuse to use it for foolish reasons, one of which is that it undermines faith. Others, not appreciating or understanding its marginal notes and references, are suspicious. Perhaps the greatest reasons for its cool reception are in the language and the style of the text, which are not as smooth and graceful as the King James Version. However, its acceptance will come, for it is the product of

ripe and consecrated scholarship and cannot long be denied its proper place.

The American Revised Version.—This is in reality the English Revised Version, but with changes that the American group of the revisers had recommended, but were not accepted by the united group. It was printed in 1901 and is recognized to be a superior work, which explains its wide use in Bible training schools, colleges, and theological seminaries. It is considered a fine textbook and is a splendid companion volume to the Old Authorized Version which we still know best.

The difference in style can readily be seen in the following selections. The King James Version of these verses, more than three hundred years old, is placed by the side of the American translation, which appeared in 1901 and, therefore, is quite recent.

King James Version	American Standard Version
I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also.—John 14: 18, 19.	I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also.—John 14: 18, 19.
For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.—Psalm 21: 3.	For thou meetest him with the blessings of goodness: Thou settest a crown of fine gold on his head. —Psalm 21: 3.

King James Version	American Standard Version
I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.—Psalm 121: 1.	I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains: From whence shall my help come?—Psalm 121: 1.
And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.—Romans 8: 28.	And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his* purpose.—Romans 8: 28.

The Long Story

This is a long story that we have been tracing in the progress of this book. It began in the dark distant past when men first wrote their impressions about God and his creation in wood and stone: it continued through the long centuries when the prophets and poets voiced his thoughts and purposes; it was borne on through other years in the Messianic hope that finally was realized in the coming of the Saviour. Then came the Christian centuries in which the New Testament was written, translated, and printed, and finally, together with the Old Testament, found its way to our hearts and homes. It is a great story, and the half has not yet been told. True, the Bible is now in our hands; but it is such a kind of book that it cannot stay there. It belongs to the entire world. It is not only our heritage; it is the heritage of every heart that beats with desire and passion to know God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. This our next chapter will make plain.

Study Topics

1. Recall some of the many reasons why the Authorized Version seemed necessary.
2. Tell the story of the King James Bible and how it was made.
3. For how long a time has this Version been used, and what has been its influence upon the life and literature of that time?
4. With such wide acceptance why should a revised version have been desired?
5. What manuscripts were available to these revisers that were not in the hands of those who made the Authorized Version?
6. Compare familiar texts in the Authorized and Revised Versions and note the difference as follows: Mark 16; Psalm 23; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 6:10–19.
7. How do you account for American Revised Version? Tell story.
8. Learn the following facts in the story of the progress of Bible translations:

4th Century, Vulgate by Jerome.
7th Century, Caedmon's paraphrases, etc., in Anglo-Saxon.
8th Century, Eadfrith's Anglo-Saxon Gospels.
8th Century, Eadhelm's Psalter in Anglo-Saxon.
8th Century, Bede's Gospel of John in Anglo-Saxon.
9th Century, King Alfred's Dooms in Anglo-Saxon.
10th Century, Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Bible.
1382, Wyclif's translation from the Vulgate.
1562, Tyndale's (from Hebrew and Greek).
1535, Coverdale (out of Douche and Latin).
1537, Matthew (follows Vulgate, Tyndale and Coverdale).
1539, Great Bible (based on Matthew Bible, Latin and Greek).

1560,	Geneva Bible (follows Great Bible, French and Latin Versions).
1568,	Bishop's Bible (revision of Great Bible).
1609–1610,	Rheims or Douai Bible (Latin and Greek Versions).
1611,	King James' (Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Spanish Versions).
1885,	Revised Bible (many versions plus old manuscripts).
1901,	American Standard Revision.

For Further Study

Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 86–153.
Stock's *The Story of Our Bible*, pages 99–115.
Penniman's *A Book About the English Bible*, pages 391–409.
Mutch's *The History of the Bible*, pages 35–37.
Article on The Bible in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE BIBLE AND MISSIONS

THE Bible is a book of many and great conquests. It captures not merely individuals but, if given a fair chance, subdues nations and kingdoms. This explains its history down through the thirty-six centuries in which it came into being and to us. It is a book of triumphs and will always be such, because it satisfies the greatest needs of man. What these are we have seen repeatedly in our study together. But they bear mentioning again. Man needs God; and the Bible is that book which, as no other, reveals his love and friendship. Man needs sympathy; the Bible shows us how tenderly and patiently God's great heart takes us in. Then there is man's great fight with sin, in which he needs a great champion and deliverer; the Bible is the book of salvation. In every age and in every place, humanity has prayed for a Saviour, for one who can make life clean and keep it so, and the Bible has in it the "Good News" of one through whose great sacrifice on the cross we are free.

Because these things are so, we can understand why the Bible is a book of victory and conquest, and is not content until the entire world has become the object of its inspiring ministry. The Bible is making history daily simply because it is a book of life, peace, and victory. Let us ponder these at some length.

Its Missionary Motive

The Christian life is missionary in motive and spirit. It could not be otherwise, without being false to Jesus Christ. The Saviour went about doing good and constantly shared his life with others. There seldom was a day when his great heart was not under some burden or feeling the ache of another. Now, Christians are like that, and because they are, we find them not merely in the brightest but also in the darkest places of the world. One reason why they live that kind of life is due to the Bible: its thought, motives, and ideals transform them. The Bible is that kind of a book and that explains why it goes wherever Christians go. They belong together and cannot be separated. How wonderful this is, a few facts will make plain. Let us note some of them.

It is the universal book.—The Bible fits in anywhere and, therefore, is welcome everywhere. At present it is translated, either in whole or in part, in seven hundred and seventy languages and dialects. That is hard to believe, but it is so. And what does this signify? It means that there is scarcely anywhere a spot or point of need, but the Bible is there with its messages of hope. It is interesting to note that the whole Bible has been printed in one hundred and fifty-eight languages and the New Testament in about three hundred. This is a feat of such magnitude that the very thought of it stuns us.

The world's best seller —The average book does not survive the fifth year of its publication. But of this book, so old, so old-fashioned, so unlike all

others, more than 30,000,000 copies were issued in the year 1923. The American Bible Society reports that it can hardly meet the demand. It sells; people want it; they buy it. The same Society states that in the 106 years of its existence it has issued 146,866,181 volumes of the Scriptures, and adds that since the invention of printing more than 600,000,000 copies of Scripture have been sold. When we consider such facts as these, we get some faint idea what Professor G. Walter Fiske, of Oberlin Theological Seminary, means when he says, "The Bible is a deathless book." Because it is a living book, it is never out of date. To buy it is an investment in life. That is why it is the world's best seller.

It releases money.—When the Bible gets into the hearts of people they act differently about their money. Something in the book tells them that not only they but their possessions belong to God, and so this marvelous thing happens: their money finds its way all over the world to provide hospitals and schools, colleges and churches, and many other good things too numerous to mention. This sort of thing began with the apostles and has been going on ever since. It will continue until God in his own time will translate us into a better clime where sin, sorrow, and death will harass us no more. But until then the Bible will raise money for God and his work where every other agency or influence will fail.

Some Great Missionary Bibles

Of these there are many, as the figures given in a former paragraph indicate. But a few should

be mentioned, for they illustrate how the wonderful forces of Christianity have made the Bible available in almost every known tongue. We can refer to them only briefly and in the hope that they may inspire further study and investigation.

Eliot's Bible for the Indians.—Once America was a great missionary territory and the Indians were the object of Christian effort. There were many and great Catholic missionaries, among whom the greatest was perhaps Father Marquette. They penetrated the wilderness, faced dangers and death, that the Indians might get to know the Saviour. But it was left to John Eliot to translate the Bible for them. This was done in 1663. This is so long ago that the old Indian tribes are no more, and perhaps no one survives who can read Eliot's version. Suffice it to say, however, that this book rendered great service, for many Indians were converted. One of them, John Occam, became a great hymn writer, and several of his hymns still appear in our church hymnals.

William Carey.—Carey was one of the first missionaries to India. He went there when America was still fighting for Independence, so that it is a long time ago. Almost single-handed he labored in that land of many millions, where, in addition to mastering the language, he encountered many difficulties. Fortunately, he was a great linguist, and in his many years of patient ministry he either assisted or supervised in forty translations of the Scriptures. He went to India in 1793 and before he died had a printing press at Serampore to print Bibles for its ancient and needy people. (See *Knights of the Labarum* for an interesting account.)

Robert Moffat.—There is no record anywhere of greater heroism than that which characterized the life of this Scotchman. The story of his life every young Christian should know. There is enough romance and tragedy in it to fill volumes. He gave his life to Africa, the Dark Continent, and through the instrumentality of the Bible began to dispel its darkness. To-day the whole Bible is published in nearly twenty African languages, and portions of it in nearly a hundred. The inspiration for such an achievement is due to Robert Moffat, who translated the whole Bible in the language of the Bechuana people.

John Paton.—In some of our missionary hymns we sing of the islands of the sea, and whenever we do so we think of at least one of them, the New Hebrides. When John Paton came to these islands the natives were cannibals. Their life was one of gross darkness and superstition. In going there he took his life in his hands and had no reasonable hope to live. For many years he lived there and led, taught, and served the people. He gave them the Bible in their own tongue and before he died he saw their savage hearts redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ.

China and the Bible.—China is a very old country. Its history goes back to the thirteenth century before Christ. Its earliest days are hid in myth and fable. But from the first it has been a nation of strange customs, and to them it has held tenaciously for many centuries. When our missionaries first went there the people wished no change in their religion and were satisfied with what they had. To-day, however, China is the Land

of Promise, and its many millions of people are gradually coming to know and to live the Christian life. Many of its young men are students of the Bible and some of its greatest statesmen are Christians. One of them recently at a public gathering prayed, "O God, make China like the United States." How did all this come about? It is a long story and many volumes have been written on it; but it all began by Robert Morrison, who, by translating the Bible in Chinese, made it an open book to these truly great and wonderful people. (Look up the *Life of Robert Morrison.*)

The Bible in Japan.—Japan has found her place in the sun. It is a great and proud country, and has claims to eminence that none may dispute. Many things have happened in Japan during the last two generations; but none is greater than this, that it has turned its back upon fifty-seven generations of feudalism and become a nation of modern ideals and methods. Many reasons may be given for this, but we come nearest to the truth when we observe that Japan has found her soul through observing, studying, and adopting the methods of Christian nations. It, too, has the Bible, and the pioneer souls who gave the Bible to the Japanese are Hepburn, Verbeck, and Fyson. For sixteen years they worked on their translation and published it in 1888.

Thus we might go on multiplying illustrations of how the Bible is becoming the heritage of all men, but we must desist. We have seen just enough of the romance to urge to further study in our homes, missionary classes, and young people's societies.

The Labor and Consecration Involved

If you have ever translated anything in school from one language into another, you can imagine some of the problems that had to be solved by our missionary pioneers when they strove to make the Bible the book of the people. Let us note a few.

(1) *In some instances there was no written language.* You will recall that in discussing the Gothic Version in Chapter XXIII, Ulfilas had to invent an alphabet before he could make his translation. This has had to be done repeatedly by our missionaries in Africa and the islands of the sea. There could be no printed Bible until there were alphabets, grammars, and dictionaries. These the missionaries had to produce before they could go further.

(2) *Dearth of words and idioms.* The great languages of culture are rich in words and synonyms. In them you can express almost every shade of meaning. Knowing this, it is hard for us to imagine that our missionaries had to deal with languages that had no words to express some of our greatest ideas. Instance a few: Certain tribes in India and China had no word for "father"; the Melanesian Islands no word for "sheep"; still others no words for "God," "faith," "love," "sacrifice," "conscience," "purity," and "sin."

An illustration or two will show how perplexing this is to translators. One of our songs very popular in Africa is "Make Me Whiter Than the Snow." Now, when this song was translated by one of our missionaries, he discovered that the tribe never having seen snow, had no word for it. Indeed,

they did not know what it was. The whitest thing they knew was the "sun," and so the line for them reads, "Make me whiter than the sun."

Another favorite song is "He is the Lily of the Valley," which you have sung many times. In Japan, the "Lily of the Valley" would not suffice to express anything beautiful or precious. There the line reads, "He is the Cherry Blossom in the mountain"; and so it should read there, for it is the favorite flower.

(3) *Great labor involved.* We will never know what it cost our pioneer missionaries to give the Bible to the world. Something more had to be done than merely mastering other languages. Many missionaries had to become type-setters and printers before this work could be accomplished. They had to master a dozen trades or occupations before they could hope to do what was on their hearts and minds.

What This Requires of Us

Work of such self-sacrifice should make us discontented with our lives which are so full of idleness, leisure, and ease. It should challenge us to great and serious tasks, for this great book still has many victories to win, and they cannot be won unless we translate its lessons into life and service. We are to be God's kingdom builders, his valiant knights, to usher in that great era when the kingdoms of the world shall be his, and every knee shall bow down to honor Christ as Lord. To that kind of life the Bible constantly challenges us.

Study Topics

1. How do you account for the Bible being a missionary book? Could it be the Bible without being missionary in its motive and spirit?
2. What great facts indicate it to be "the Universal Book"? Is the Bible a "good seller"? Why do people buy it?
3. Prepare a report on William Carey, giving special attention to his work in translating the Bible.
4. There are several very interesting stories to be told about John Paton. Look up his life and indicate what his translation did for the New Hebrides.
5. Recall some of the many difficulties that have to be met in translating the Bible.
6. Do you think there will ever be a time when the Bible will not be needed? Do you need it? If so, why?

For Further Study

Annual *Report of American Bible Society* for 1923.
Miller's *Our Reasonable Faith*, pages 19–23.
Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 133–160.
Mutch's *The History of the Bible*, pages 41–43.

CHAPTER XXXII

MAKING THE BIBLE OUR OWN

For some time we have been traveling together down through the long years in which the Bible was made and transmitted to us. All along the way we felt its influence and were impressed by its light and power. We have seen people prosper because they accepted its teachings and obeyed its precepts. Then, too, we have observed that the world cannot afford to neglect the Bible without inviting fearful risks.

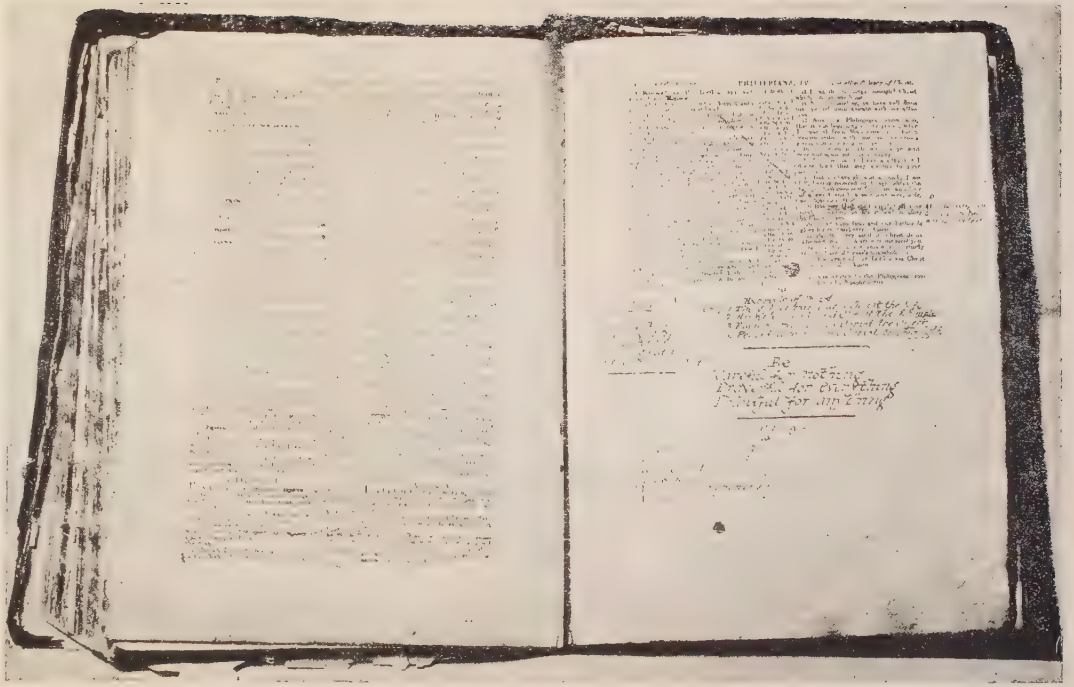
Our great concern now is to make God's Word our own. It has come to us as an inheritance: how shall we appropriate and enjoy it? God's heart is in it: how can we use it so that its love and compassion will help us to meet life's problems, face its difficulties, surmount its obstacles, and bear its burdens? Long centuries ago the psalmist sang, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path": how can we apply it so that its great thoughts and ideals may inspire, control, and direct us? There are folk who are constantly sustained by it and would not think of doing anything without its refreshing counsel. Can we so appropriate it that it will render us the same service? Fortunately, that is possible; and in this concluding chapter we will note a few hints helpful to that end.

Give God's Friendship a Chance

In the third chapter we saw that the Bible is a book of friendship, and that God is the source and secret of it. The Bible is a friendly book because it reveals God as man's Comforter and Comrade. It endeavors to show that he, as the poet says, "takes short steps by our side" and is our unfailing guide. Now, if that is so, we cannot hope to make the Bible our own without remembering these facts. In other words, we must give God's friendship a chance, and this *can be done by making the Bible our companion.*

Dwight L. Moody's example.—Mr. Moody was a great evangelist and influenced thousands of people. From a humble New England home he rose to world eminence. Young and old read his sermons, sought his help and counsel, believed in his prayers. What made him that kind of a man? It was the Bible. The Bible made him; and this was possible because as a very young man he resolved to make it his companion. He believed it was the book of God's love and friendship, and gave it a chance by studying it. One of his biographers informs us about Mr. Moody's habits of study, and states that he rose early every morning before the factory whistles blew and the hum of machinery sounded in the air, to be alone with God and the Bible. By the time other folk were up and around, his soul was refreshed by communion, and he faced the responsibilities of the day with glad heart and radiant face.

How Mr. Moody himself felt about the Bible is important. A fine bit of testimony may be found



MOODY'S BIBLE
Note underscoring and outlines.
From *Congregationalist*, November 3, 1900.

in a Bible he gave to his first grandchild. He inscribed it as follows:

> The Bible for the last forty years has been the dearest thing on earth to me, and now I give a copy as my first gift to my grandchild, Irene Moody, with a prayer that it may be her companion through life and guide her to those mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love and serve him on earth.—*D. L. Moody.*

This testimony points its own moral. The Bible can help us most when we make it a companion. (How Mr. Moody read his Bible see picture.) Such is the object of the New Testament League, to which many high-school students belong. The League invites its members to carry the New Testament with them, that, as opportunity offers, they may read and study it each day. Another way to give the Bible a chance is to observe the "Morning Watch," which is the practice of many young Christians. Whenever simple rules like these are faithfully observed, we give God's friendship, as revealed in the Bible, a chance to help us. Then it becomes our heritage indeed and makes us unspeakably rich, for God reveals himself in it, just as the love of a friend in a letter he has sent.

Make God's Purposes Your Own

These words should be repeated every day, for right at this point many of us fail. If God loves as the Bible says he does, it is due to the fact that he hopes in this way to have better people and a better world. The Bible tells us that God has very

definite plans and purposes for the world, and that they are realized through folk like ourselves. Consequently, we must remember that the Bible is not a book of entertainment. It is a very serious book, and in nothing more than this, it shows what God wants us to be and do.

Roosevelt for a better world.—God wants a better world. That we must never forget. It will help us to understand why God is in constant conflict with unrighteousness, injustice, oppression, worldliness, and sin. All these are foes of his great purpose of making the world better, cleaner, saner, kindlier, and more peaceable. When the Bible is read with this in mind, it opens up in most remarkable fashion and becomes the most stirring book ever written.

One of our greatest Americans, Theodore Roosevelt, read his Bible in this way, and it made him one of the most fearless champions of good government we have ever had. His addresses were battle cries, his speeches were sermons, they were so full of biblical truth and spiritual passion. It was the Bible that made him that kind of a man. He read many books, but never at the expense of the Bible. He was such a great reader that a press reporter said of him, "Mr. Roosevelt eats books." But while this was true, he was attached to no book quite so firmly as the Bible. If he had a great address to write, or an important matter to decide, the Bible was within reach to offer guidance and counsel. In his beautiful home at Sagamore Hill the Bible was always on his study desk. When he went to Africa to explore the continent he took with him a small library, especially bound in pig

skin. The first book selected for the same was the Bible and he put it there not as an ornament but as a necessity. Of it he said, "The moral education of the world is due to its pages."

Frequently in his addresses Mr. Roosevelt witnessed to the value of the Bible. Let us note a few specimens:

"If a man is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss which he had better make all possible effort to correct.[1]

"If we read the Bible aright, or read a book which teaches us to go forth and do the work of the Lord; to do the work of the Lord in the world as we find it; to try to make things better in the world, even if only a little better because we have lived in it, . . . we plead for a closer and wider and deeper study of the Bible so that our people may be in fact, as well as in theory, 'doers of the word and not hearers only.' "[2]

Such is Mr. Roosevelt's testimony. Need we wonder that almost his very last message to the world was put in a book entitled, *Fear God and Do Your Part?* The Bible made him a tremendous power for good, and what it did for him it will do for us.

John H. Converse and better people.—God wants better people. That goes without saying. But he cannot have a better world without better men and women. God may carve the mountains into objects of sublime beauty and dress the valleys

[1] From *Roosevelt's Religion.* The Abingdon Press.

[2] *Ibid.*

with garments of gold and green, but if the people who dwell in the mountains and work in the valleys are indifferent to his will, the world cannot be what it should. Iniquity defeats God's purpose; sin voids his plans.

A splendid example of a man who read his Bible in order to be more useful to God in producing better people was John H. Converse, for many years president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia. Mr. Converse had great interest in the locomotives that were built by his company, but he was just as eager that their shops and mills should turn out better men and women. How did this come about? This desire was born in his heart through the Word of God. The Bible made him devoted to religious enterprises and civic causes. The following testimony from a short biographical sketch speaks volumes:

"Mr. Converse's enthusiasm in carrying the gospel to every creature was so great that he created a trust fund of two hundred thousand dollars, the income of which was to be used to conduct the work during his life time and guaranteed its continuance after his death."

Somehow these are the things we must think about when we read and study the Bible. They put us in the frame of mind that will help us to extract from the Bible what is needed most for ourselves and the world. They will help us to understand it, and coming to an understanding of it, we make it our own. Then its strange and wonderful power will renew us daily and, above all things, make God very real and vital to our souls.

Keep It by Giving It Away

This is a strange bit of advice to offer and, perhaps, has to be explained. It looks like a contradiction in terms. Someone will say, "That is impossible; you cannot give anything away and still have it." Of some matters that is true of course; but it is not true of all things. For instance, you can give a story away and still have it. The more frequently you give it away the more thoroughly you have it. The difference between the poor story-teller and a good one is just this: the one keeps his and loses them, the other gives them away and retains them. Indeed, there are few things in the intellectual and spiritual world where this principle does not multiply one's store of knowledge and power. The Saviour understood this and one day called attention to it, saying, "He that saveth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake shall keep it unto life eternal."

So we need to give the Bible away and learn how to quote its great passages freely and correctly. By doing this we keep it. But, of course, this cannot be done unless we become "Bible characters," who have gotten inside the Bible and which has gotten inside of us to control and inspire us with its power, light, and wisdom. To realize such a happy condition we will have to do several things:

(1) Read the Bible to become acquainted with its vast and varied storehouse of good things.

(2) We must study it in order to master its contents and so give them a chance to enrich and quicken us. To do this well we should own Bibles with concordances, historical notes, and maps of Old Testament and New Testament times.

(3) Then, above all things, we should aim to live out its great ideas, ideals, and programs. If the Bible says, "Love your enemies," let us love them; "Pray for them that despitefully use you," pray for them with all our heart. If it indicates that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," then let us be good neighbors and blameless in God's sight. By living lives of this kind the Bible will become our own. It will be a very effective way of enjoying this great heritage, which so often is only "a book," when it wants to be a wonderful spiritual tonic.

(4) We need to learn how to pray through the Bible. It is surprising how it has the very words that most perfectly express our inmost yearnings and needs. This is so because the Bible is biographical in character and records the experiences of men and women who lived close to God, talked to him about their sins and transgressions, their desires and aspirations, their hopes and their plans. So the Bible fits right into our lives and understands us, and there are times when its words take us right into the presence of God. Therefore, let us learn how to pray through its prayers and petitions.

Some such disciplines as these are necessary, if the Bible is to become our own. We have got to give it away, if we are to keep it; and we must make it our own before its benefits can be shared with others.

Our Story Not Finished

We have come to the end of the book, but our story is little more than begun. It closes not with "The end" but "To be continued." The remaining chapters will be written by each one of us, as we go on; and perhaps they will be more interesting because they will spring out of our own lives. As Doctor Beecher once said, "We are to be walking Bibles, through whom God thinks, speaks, and works." That being so, these closing lines should lead us all to rededicate our lives to Him who has given us this heritage in order that we might be worth-while men and women.

"O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky,
We praise thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our foot-steps,
Shines on from age to age."

Study Topics

1. What do you mean by an inheritance? What conditions must be met to make an inheritance possible?
2. If the Bible is our heritage, has it cost anyone labor and sacrifice to make it possible? Explain.
3. Indicate some ways by which we may make the Bible our own.
4. Do you think the Bible will ever become out of date? Defend your position.
5. Discuss freely the methods of Bible Study now employed by members of the class. Are they satisfied?

6. Find out whether John Wanamaker, the merchant prince; John S. Huyler, the candy man; Abraham Lincoln, the friend of the Negro; and Cyrus H. McCormick, the inventor of the harvesting machine, were students of the Bible.
7. State in your own words the examples of Moody, Roosevelt, and Converse.

For Further Study

Stock's *The Story of the Bible*, pages 184–206.
Reisner's *Roosevelt's Religion*, pages 305–324.
Life of Moody, by His Son.
Howard's *Their Call to Service*, chapters on Converse, Huyler, and others.

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